

**HUMAN CAPITAL INVESTMENT FOR  
FRONT-LINE NON MANAGERIAL  
EMPLOYEES IN THE HOSPITALITY  
SECTOR IN DUBAI (U.A.E.).**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The topic of this research is “Human Capital Investment for front-line non managerial employees in the hospitality sector in Dubai (U.A.E)”.

The purpose of this research is to explore the commitment towards human capital investment offered by five star hotels in Dubai to lower level employees within the Rooms and Food and Beverage departments from a training perspective. Dubai is known for its worldwide reputation of delivering high quality service and luxury products to its international clientele. Dubai is attracting millions of guests into the hotels every year, and forecasting a tremendous growth of the travel, tourism, and hospitality sectors in future. Despite its oil production, Dubai has realised the potential and growth of these sectors as well as retail, medical and finance. Hence, this laid emphasis on the responsibility of hotel companies to offer quality training to its workforce in order to continue with growth, success, expansion plans, and increased worldwide reputation. Furthermore, the country is a creator of employment since it is heavily dependent on labour migrants and expatriates, originating from all over the world, attracting primarily people from the Subcontinent, Asian, European, and other Middle Eastern countries. Consequently, a much-diversified workforce with different levels of education, skills, and background is employed in the hospitality industry. Therefore, there is a need to conduct this study focusing on the following aims. Firstly, to examine the current human capital needs for employees in the hospitality sector in Dubai (U.A.E.). Secondly, to consider and evaluate current efforts by hotel training departments to devise and deliver training to front-line employees. Thirdly, to assess employees’ views regarding the current investment in human capital and to identify areas for improvement. Lastly, to develop a training model underlining the importance of HCI and its constructs within five star hotels in Dubai (U.A.E.).

This was achieved through both primary and secondary research. Based on the literature review a suggested training model was developed which kept changing according to the results of the primary research.

The methodological approach of this study is twofold. A mixed methods approach is been adopted and hence the study starts with the collection of data through the qualitative phase including interviews with Learning and Development Directors/managers of five star hotels, followed by observations of training programmes. The second phase relates to the

quantitative data collection with the use of a questionnaire self-administered to front-line employees of five star hotels in Dubai.

The key findings of this study demonstrate that the company regards front-line employees as key assets and hence human capital investment in five star hotels in Dubai is high. Furthermore, there is organisational and management support towards training, which supports the function of the Learning and Development department despite being just a support department. The effectiveness of the Learning and Development department is reflected upon the adequacy of the training department, and high levels of satisfactions are expressed by front-line employees as well as by Learning and Development managers. Because of these training interventions, positive outcomes are associated with employees, customers and organisations. Furthermore, front-line employees agree that because of training, benefits relate not only to their knowledge, skills, and abilities but also to their attitude and behaviour. Learning and Development managers expressed concerns with challenges closely link to the Human Resource practices as well as lack of support by line-managers, whereas front-line employees shared high levels of satisfaction with line-managers support towards their training and developmental activities. Furthermore, despite the effectiveness of the Learning and Development, a major weakness relates to the lack of evaluation and follow up which in turn results to lack of reporting return-on-investment to executive board as well as shareholders. The study hence developed two additional models based on each set of results. Besides, by using data triangulation the study recommends a training model underlining the importance of HCI and its constructs within five star hotels in Dubai based on the new constructs emerged from the findings.

Conclusions are drawn based on model 4 which explains human capital investment from a training perspective in the luxury hotel sector within Dubai reflecting on the contribution to academic knowledge as well as limitations and suggestions for further research are proposed.

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## **List of Abbreviations.**

BTS	Bartlett test of sphericity
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CV	Curriculum Vitae
F&B	Food and Beverage
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GM	General Manager
HC	Human Capital
HCI	Human Capital Investment
HOD	Head of Department
IDP	Individual Development Plan
ILO	International Labour Organization
IWOM	Internal Word of Mouth
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
L&D	Learning and Development
LNA	Learning Needs Analysis
LQA	Leading Quality Assurance
LQS	Leading Quality Standards
NVQ	National Vocational Qualifications
OJT	On-the-job Training
ROI	Return-on-investment
SVQ	Scottish Vocational Qualifications
TMS	Talent Management System
TNA	Training Needs Assessment
U.A.E.	United Arab Emirates
U.K.	United Kingdom
U.S.A.	United States of America

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# CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION AND AIMS.

## 1.1. INTRODUCTION.

The hospitality and tourism industries are people focused, labour intensive industries, generating employment for the host population and country (Baum, 2006; Deery and Jago, 2009; Ladkin, 2011; Liu and Wall, 2005). Tourism is the “*quickest growing sector of the economy with regard to creation of new workplace*” (Vujic, Becic & Crnjar, 2008, p.200). Tourism employment is apparent in sectors and activities such as transport, travel agencies, tourist attractions, tourist information offices, recreational facilities, hotels, and restaurants. Therefore, it is vital to identify the sector of tourism, the location, type and size of establishment, and occupational titles (Riley *et al.*, 2002). The products of the hospitality sector provide two dimensions: tangible, such as rooms, and food and beverage outlets; and intangible, such as warm greeting, speed and outlet ambience. In addition to other product characteristics, the hotel industry operates 24/7/12/365 days which impacts directly the obtainability of manpower, scheduling and rostering, compensation, working conditions, and employee well-being (Rawstron, 1999 as cited in Soltani & Wilkinson, 2010).

The contribution of travel and tourism in 2011 accounted for 255 million jobs worldwide, contributing nine per cent of global GDP, with a value of US\$6 trillion. In the next decade there is an estimate growth of four per cent per annum, making up 10% of global GDP equivalent to approximately US\$10 trillion (WTTC, 2012a). The forecast by 2022, predicts that the industry’s contribution will account for 328 million jobs globally in sectors such as hotels, travel agencies, airlines and other transportation services (WTTC, 2012a). In reference to employments’ contribution in the U.A.E in 2011, travel and tourism directly supported 166,000 jobs equivalent to 4.6 per cent of total employment. However, the World Travel and Tourism Council have predicated continuous rises as by 2012 a 4.2 per cent rise to 173,000 jobs (4.6 per cent of total employment), and by the next decade, travel and tourism will account for 546,000 jobs in the country (WTTC, 2012b).

The hospitality sector, being a part of the tourism industry, has a global growth of over 12.7 million hotel rooms worldwide, including 4.9 million in the U.S.A. and 3.9 million in Europe. The estimated growth of new rooms planned or under development accounts for 1.3 million representing more than seven per cent of the existing supply worldwide. More specifically,



the Middle East and Africa accommodates more than 20 per cent of this new supply (WTTC, 2011).

The hospitality industry in the Middle East region is booming, with strong growth evident in the U.A.E. So far, 99 new hotel projects are completed or will be completed between 2012 and 2016 (<http://www.hoteliermiddleeast.com/hotels/country/united-arab-emirates/8/>). Dubai's hotel industry is largely comprised of five star properties totalling 20,734 rooms in 2011 (DTCM, 2011). Consequently, the increase of luxury hotels alone results in the creation of new jobs in the hospitality sector, demanding more emphasis on education and training in the sector (Amaize, Mady and Benson, 2011). In addition, there is an urgent need to attract more UAE Nationals into the hospitality industry, since it is heavily dependent on labour migrants for lower job positions and expatriates for senior appointments (Forstenlechner & Mellahi, 2010; Wilkins, 2001). This is mainly an outcome of the size of the UAE's population, which is just under eight million, with U.A.E. Nationals accounting only for 1.3 million of the total population (BMI, 2012). This requires high reliance on imported labour (Randeree, 2012) because of converting the country into a financial power within the GCC region (Mohamed, 2002). The diversified workforce in the hospitality sector within the U.A.E. can be seen as an advantage, since it sustains the growth of the industry in the country, but simultaneously is perceived as a major concern by the government and hotel companies (Stephenson, Russell, & Edgar, 2010).

In the U.A.E., the image of the hospitality industry is poor alongside the negative image of occupations due to its low level of skills employment. A number of other factors also impact on the hospitality industry, including: lack of access to labour with relevant experience and knowledge of the hospitality industry; recruitment and retention issues; low wages; demographics of workforce; perceived lack of career opportunities; unfavourable management styles; a poor image as an employer; lack of rewards and benefits; heavy use of expatriate labour; barriers to employment; low levels of training and education, and strenuous physical labour (Al Haddad, 2011; Forstenlechner & Mellahi, 2010; Randeree, 2012; Sharpley, 2002; Stephenson *et al.*, 2010).

The characteristics of the hospitality industry are also considered to be major impediments and reasons for the lack of interest from U.A.E. Nationals to enter the industry. The main deterrents include low salaries, poor industry reputation, long working hours, low social image, and lack of job security. In addition, aspects such as local traditions, religion, social

norms and cultural norms of the country also influence the choice of a career within the industry (Al-Ali, 2008; Forstenlechner & Mellahi, 2011). On the other hand, employers in the private sector believe that the expectations of U.A.E. Nationals are very high. These expectations mainly refer to expectations including high levels of remuneration, higher job security, a less challenging work environment and lack of preparation of U.A.E. Nationals to work in the private sector and equip themselves with the required work attitudes (De Boer & Turner, 2007; Harry 2007; Randeree, 2012). These expectations are an outcome of the fact that many locals are employed in the public sector where these conditions are standard. This indicates a need for further amelioration in the educational and training system offered by the country and private companies (Al-Ali, 2008; Pech, 2009). Companies such as Accor, Hyatt International, Jebel Ali International, Jumeirah, Rotana, Shangri-La, Sheraton, Dusit, InterContinental, Fairmont, Hilton, Kempinski Mall of the Emirates and Le Royal Meridien, form part of the Emiratisation Task Force for Tourism (Express Hospitality, 2008).

Enhancing the skills of the hospitality workforce appears to be developing into an increasingly key dimension of hospitality companies who are sustained by their strategies in learning and development. From a government perspective, this is reflected in the localisation strategies such as Emiratisation forming part of a broader economic development agenda (Al Haddad, 2011; Randeree, 2010; Stephenson *et al.*, 2013; Wilkins, 2001). However, these strategies so far have shown very slow progress and not attained the expected outcomes (Al-Waqfi & Forstenlechner, 2010; Hafez, 2009). Despite the efforts of participating in the Emiratisation strategy, the hospitality industry has consequentl been identified as a challenging sector that has been unsuccessful in attracting and retaining UAE Nationals (Ezz Al Deen, 2009).

It is therefore apparent that there is an essential need for Human Capital Investment (HCI) in front-line employees in the hospitality sector in order to preserve the reputation, competitiveness, and future development of a worldwide luxury tourist destination (Gomezelj & Mihalic, 2008; Crouch, 2011) such as Dubai. In order to achieve and maintain global recognition of this long-haul destination (Awar & Sohail, 2003) that attracted over eleven million guests in 2014 (DTCM, 2014), the development of the labour force in the hospitality industry in Dubai is undoubtedly crucial.

HC Theory suggests that improvements in the quality of the labour force assists in strong economic growth and performance, and can only be achieved through education and training,

which are considered to be the most important investments in HC (Becker, 1964; Schultz, 1963). Furthermore, Becker (1962) referred to the different kinds of investment such as on-the-job training, schooling, and other knowledge. Placing a greater emphasis on on-the-job training can be either generic or specific, since employees increase their productivity based on the new set of acquired skills and enhancement of the old ones. From an organisational perspective, human capital entails constituents such as professional, social, and commercial competences, relationships and cooperation with others within the organization and values by displaying the right attitude and behaviour (Bontis, 2004). Consequently, the strong belief in human capital is reflected in the training philosophy adopted by hospitality companies (Baruch, 2004) as well as through a reflection on companies' vision, mission statements, strategic objectives and managerial activities (Young, McManus & Canale, 2005).

Training is the driving force to develop HC within organisations only if it is perceived as an investment rather than an expense (Namasivayan & Denizci, 2006; Young *et al.*, 2005). Furthermore, hospitality organisations need to consider employees as the most important asset and instil a culture of training and learning. This will develop and enhance the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the workforce, encouraging positive individual and organisational results (Young *et al.*, 2005). These results will also apply for hospitality jobs of lower operatives which are perceived as non-complex jobs, demanding minor levels of human capital in contrast to other industries (Namasivayan & Denizci, 2006; Sturman, 2001).

Another element to consider is that the hospitality industry is known for having low levels of HCI, which reflects in lack of training, and learning and development initiatives (Baum, 2002; Croner, 2004; Marcjanna, 1998; Des Monk & Ryding, 2007; Lashley, 2009; Woods, 2003). Despite the fact that lower level jobs are considered to be non-complex, and hotels are not primarily regarded as knowledge-intensive, front-line employees in five star hotels need to possess a mix of 'soft', 'hard', and 'aesthetic' skills. This allows them to deliver the promised luxury product and service to meet the needs of a very diverse, demanding, and international clientele and, furthermore, meet and exceed those customer expectations during 'service encounters' (Lashley, 2009; Lundberg & Mossberg, 2008; Namasivayan & Denizci, 2006; Nickson, Warhust, & Dutton, 2005).

In this context, HCI is addressed from a training perspective throughout this study. The relationship between training and organisational performance is multifaceted (Dubois & Rothwell, 2004; Somerville, 2007). Hence, training interventions need to be offered to front-

line employees to improve individual skills and meet with developmental needs, as well as the organisational goals and strategic objectives (Montesimo, 2002; Young *et al.*, 2005). Organisations should therefore focus clearly on the training process that is composed of steps such as: the Learning Needs Assessment; ensuring employees' readiness for training; creating a learning environment; ensuring transfer of training; selecting training methods; and evaluating training methods (Noe *et al.*, 2012). Moreover, another influential factor is the size of the hospitality organisation, which drives the structure and approach to training. Larger firms adopt a more formal and structured approach than smaller size organisations, as they require a proper training needs assessment, dedicated budget, and resources allocation (Blake, Sinclair, & Campos, 2006; Lashley, 2009).

Additionally, any type of HCI is associated with organisational support (Bulut & Culha, 2010; Chambel & Sobral, 2011; Santos & Stuart, 2003; Tai, 2006) as well as management support prior to and after any training intervention (Hai-yan & Baum, 2006; Santos & Stuart, 2003; Tharenou 2001). Organisational and management support towards training are two interrelated dimensions. Firstly, perceived organisational support relates to an employee's perception of the concern an organisation demonstrates for his or her well-being and values employees' contributions (Robbins & Judge, 2009; Young *et al.*, 2005). Furthermore, there is a positive relationship between perceived organisational support and the use of human resource management practices that are developmental in nature such as training (Coyle-Shapiro, 2002). Secondly, from a training perspective, organisational support is strongly associated with consciousness of employees in efficiently executing job duties and tasks and to employees' commitment and intellectual agility (Butcher, Sparks & Kennedy, 2009). Therefore, hospitality organisations should demonstrate support towards training by ensuring that provision of adequate training is given to front-line employees, which in most cases is extremely low and negative (Chiang, Back, & Canter, 2005).

Training can take several forms such as formal relating to off the job, induction, and apprenticeships, or informal through on-the-job training and cross training amongst other types of training, internal to an organisation or external (Lee-Ross & Pryce, 2010; Noe *et al.*, 2012; Siddons, 2003). In addition, training interventions differ in terms of the intensity, quality, purpose (Chiang *et al.*, 2005), length (Thacker & Blanchard, 2006), and cost (Gleeson & Keep, 2004). Perceived organisational support results in increased employee commitment, increased employee involvement, increased employee self-image and

identification with the organisation, enhancement of feelings such as being valued and trusted by the organisation, and increased employee job satisfaction (Buckley & Caple, 2008; Nadeem, 2010; Santos & Stuart, 2003; Washington, Feinstein & Busser, 2003; Young *et al.*, 2005). For this reason, organisational support towards training plays a crucial role in the returns of HCI.

Furthermore, HCI is related to the degree of support given by supervisors and line-managers both pre and post training interventions (Tharenou, 2001). Line-managers and supervisors need to value training and encourage participation of front-line employees in training and developmental activities (Chiang *et al.*, 2005). Despite the dissatisfaction from line-managers and supervisors due to their minimal support towards training, their role is invaluable in determining the selection of front-line employees to attend training programmes. Line managers and supervisors also grant access to training and time off to front-line employees. They identify skill gaps of individual employees and the need of further improvement. Moreover, managers communicate and match the developmental needs of front-line employees with the availability and suitability of the provided training programmes by the organisation (Boon & Arumugan, 2006; Bulut & Culha, 2010). Moreover, their responsibilities expand further after front-line employees attend any training programmes, since they have to provide the appropriate climate for training transfer into the work environment (Berry & Morris, 2005; Machin & Fogarty, 2004; Yaw, 2008).

Supervisors and line managers also facilitate feedback on employees' job performance and provide assistance in developing employees' skills acquired from training and developmental interventions. Willingness to discuss issues with employees in utilising new skills and knowledge in the work environment, and provision of coaching and guidance of employees to assist the achievement of work related objectives and individuals' developmental goals are also crucial. The above-mentioned responsibilities reflect the necessary support required by line-managers and supervisors to front-line employees (Frash, Antun, Kline, & Almanza, 2010; Kontoghiorges, 2001; Tharenou, 2001; Yaw, 2008; Yelon, Sheppard, Sleight, & Ford, 2004). Even so, managers' support towards training tends to be negative due to the fluctuation of business levels in hotels. This results in the restriction of employees attending training programmes, lack of funding from departmental training budgets, remote access of training locations, lack of approval, lack of information on availability of programmes, and inadequacy of training programmes provided by the organisation (Baum, 2002; Blake *et al.*,

2006; Des Monk & Ryding, 2007). Therefore, because of the above reasons management support for training is an essential factor to the enhancement of HCI.

Companies need to recognise that organisational and management support for training go hand in hand with the adequacy of training environment. The importance of an adequate training environment is supported by the training facilities and services offered to front-line employees (Chiang *et al.*, 2005), organisational commitment (Lipshitz, Popper, & Friedman, 2002) and increased financial assistance by the company to create a learning environment (Clements & Josiam, 1995; Lashley, 2009). In contrast, an unsuitable training environment can be perceived as a barrier to training (Giffard, Guegnard & Strietska-Ilina, 2001).

The quality of training programmes, the trainers' knowledge and expertise (Pont, 1996; Lalaguna, 2007; Leigh, 2006), the training content and training material, the training techniques used to deliver effectively the training content used by trainers (Kalargyrou & Woods, 2009), length and timings of training programmes (Thacker & Blanchard, 2006; Vujic *et al.*, 2008), funding of training programmes, the location of the training facilities, the training venue itself (Aksu, 2005), and the provision of food and beverage services can create either positive or negative front-line employees experiences. Furthermore, these factors can influence their acquisition of knowledge, skills, and abilities as well as their learning curve (Santos & Stuart, 2003; Yaw, 2008). It is therefore fundamental that there is an adequate training environment since it can affect employees' participation in training and development as well as training motivation levels (Sirota, Mischkind & Irwin, 2005; Switzer Nagy, & Mullins, 2005).

The return on HCI in any organisation is twofold. Investment in training and effective utilisation of skilled employees has a positive impact on the individual employee and the organisation. These potential benefits could be classified as job-related, career-related, and personal (Buckley and Caple, 2008).

Once employees have acquired the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities, transfer of training into the work environment should be followed up in order to enhance the training and development effectiveness (Burke & Hutchins, 2007; Yaw, 2008). Training effectiveness attributes are normally reflected in the potential organisational benefits including improved overall financial performance, profitability (Thomas & Long, 2001), and increased productivity (Colombo & Stanca, 2008). Moreover, improvement in customer service results

in increased customer satisfaction (Warech & Tracey, 2004), greater organisational commitment (Owens, 2006), business growth, higher retention rates (Aggarwal & Bhargana, 2011; Arms, 2012; Nadeem, 2010), decreased turnover (Davidson & Wang, 2011; Lam & Chan, 2002), and succession planning and talent management (Cameron, 2007).

Training and development is a method that equips organisations with flexibility, adaptability, and the robustness required for continued existence during competitive times (Kennedy, 2009; Tai, 2006). However, hospitality organisations fail to appropriately measure the organisational benefits due to lack of assessing the effect of key performance indicators linked to the potential outcomes of training interventions and return-on-investment measurements (Bahlis, 2008; Kline & Harris, 2008; Santos & Stuart, 2003).

In the hospitality industry HCI tends to be measured through training evaluations which are mainly conducted through ‘happy sheets’, and through feedback either from trainees and/or line-managers, but overall training evaluation is perceived as a neglected area (Santos & Stuart, 2003). Additionally, the use of different resources such as affirmative customer feedback, quality audits, mystery shoppers, reduced wastage, and growth in sales and revenue form part of training effectiveness but are not really linked to the outcomes of training interventions (DiPietro, 2004). Kirkpatrick (1975) and Phillips (1994) proposed a distinct model for evaluating workplace training which is based on five dimensions consisting of reaction, learning, behaviour, results, and return-on-investment. Sturman (2003) explained the use of utility analysis in the hospitality industry, and Namasivayan, and Denizci (2006) in the service industries. Despite the available tools to evaluate training, associated reasons for not being able to quantify ROI are based on the lack of skills possessed by human resource practitioners that allow them to understand and gather the necessary information. Negative perceptions of measuring ROI by human resource practitioners, insufficient time, ineffective training needs assessment, ineffective tracking systems and metrics, and lack of confidence in reporting incorrect values to higher management fearing loss of their jobs are also highlighted (Brown, 2001; Flynn, 1998; Kline & Harris, 2008; Stern, 2011). Furthermore, employees’ past work experience, preparedness to learn, and attentiveness to responsibilities allocated and attitudes mean that the intangible benefits of training turn out to be harder to measure effectively. Consequently, the majority of organisations prefer not to evaluate training despite the high amounts invested due to lack of real justification and accountability for investing in human capital (Carrington & Tayles, 2012; Engström, Westnes & Westnes, 2003).

## **1.2. RESEARCH AIMS.**

The purpose of this study is to explore HCI for front-line non-managerial employees in the hospitality sector in Dubai (U.A.E.). There is a need to conduct this study in a Middle Eastern environment and especially in the Emirates of Dubai (U.A.E.) since it is considered as a developing and new luxury destination with a growing worldwide reputation of its five star hotel market. Furthermore, being a creator of employment to a much-diversified workforce with different backgrounds, age, race, religion, educational attainment, and cultures, there is a massive need to invest in HC. Consequently, this study concentrates on the required set of knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes required by front-line employees in the luxury hotel sector and the HCI offered by five star hotels in Dubai, U.A.E. to its front-line non-managerial employees. The aims of this study are:

**Aim 1:** To establish the importance of human capital investment for front line employees in the hospitality sector.

**Aim 2:** To examine the current human capital needs for employees in the hospitality sector in Dubai (U.A.E.).

**Aim 3:** To consider and evaluate current efforts by hotel training departments to devise and deliver training to front-line employees.

**Aim 4:** To assess employees' views regarding the current investment in human capital and to identify areas for improvement.

**Aim 5:** To develop a training model underlining the importance of HCI and its constructs within five star hotels in Dubai (U.A.E.).

## **1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS.**

In order to create a framework for this study the following research questions have been developed;

**Research Question 1:** Is human capital investment through training important for front-line employees in the hospitality sector?

**Research Question 2:** Is there an association between organisational support towards training and management support towards training?



**Research Question 3:** Does organisational support towards training have a positive relationship with the adequacy of training facilities and services?

**Research Question 4:** Does management support towards training have a positive relationship with the adequacy of training facilities and services?

**Research Question 5:** Does the adequacy of training facilities and services have a positive relationship with perceived benefits of training?

## **1.4. STRUCTURE OF THIS STUDY.**

Chapter Two – The role of HCI and training. The study begins with an overview of employment in the hospitality and tourism industry, followed by the definition of HCI and its importance to the organisation and its employees. Furthermore, the definition of training, learning, education, and development within the hospitality and tourism industry forming the basis of HC Theory are discussed. The different perceptions of attitudes to training within the hospitality industry are elaborated leading to the benefits of training to front-line employees and to the organisation, ending the chapter with an explanation of return on HCI measurements.

Chapter Three – Tourism and hospitality in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.). This chapter entails an overview of the sheikdom of Dubai and the U.A.E. It discusses the education, population, and growth of tourism and hospitality in Dubai and the U.A.E. followed by the challenges and trends faced by Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) members. It also focuses on the labour demographics, salary ranges of hospitality front-line employees, and it then proceeds with an explanation of Emiratisation, which is the U.A.E.'s localisation strategy.

Chapter Four – Methodology. This chapter begins with a discussion of the difficulties encountered by the researcher, with the explanation of phases, which leads to the finalisation of the research questions and to the design of the research instruments, and with the justification of the location for this study. The research philosophy is explained alongside the justification of mixed methods research. The research approach to this study is explained through the discussion of the steps related to the secondary data collection and its limitations, the revision of the research problem and formulation of research aims and defining concepts and variables resulting in the development of the suggested training model.

Primary data collection: Research Design. The explanation of the two phases in respect to Phase I regarding the qualitative research methods followed by Phase II regarding the quantitative research methods adopted in this study are discussed and justified. Then sampling consists of the research population, sampling frame and sample selection process which are explained, moving into the development of the research instruments used in this study related to semi-structured, face-to-face interviews, observations, and self-administered questionnaires, explaining the results from the pilot study. It then proceeds with the administration of the research instruments and the selection and justification of the methods of data analysis.

Chapter Five – Findings. The main findings are included in this chapter structured around aims two, three, and four forming the basis for the fifth aim of this study discussed in the following chapter. This chapter illustrates the content analysis of interviews with hotel management, and the data analysis of observations resulting in a training model developed through the qualitative results. It then follows with the profile of front-line employees and training of front-line employees based on descriptive and frequencies results. The findings on employees' perceptions regarding training are further explained based on Pearson Product-Moment Correlations followed by the results of the Factor Analysis. Hence, these quantitative results form the basis of the development of the training model supported statistically.

Chapter Six – Discussion. This chapter discusses and interprets the findings associating them to the existing literature review, showing similarities and contrasts between the results of this study and existing studies. Furthermore, it compares the qualitative and quantitative findings to show similarities and highlighting any contradictory findings. Consequently, ending in the discussion of the fifth aim, which is supported by qualitative and the quantitative findings making use of data triangulation, and consequently assisting in the development of a training model underlining the importance of HCI and its constructs within five star hotels in Dubai, U.A.E.

Chapter Seven – Conclusions and Recommendations. Finally, this chapter draws the conclusions, academic contribution to research and limitations of this study in relation to HCI of front-line employees in the hospitality industry in Dubai (U.A.E.) reflected in five star hotel properties.

## **CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW: THE ROLE OF HUMAN CAPITAL INVESTMENT AND TRAINING.**

### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

The first part of this chapter explains the importance of employment in the tourism and hospitality industry and its barriers and challenges, as well as the characteristics of the hospitality workforce. Furthermore, issues such as attraction, retention, training, employee morale, labour shortages, and lack of skilled labour are addressed. The image of the industry despite being glamorous is discussed by highlighting the pros and cons perceived by employees as well as employers. Consequently, hospitality organisations are trying to resolve these problematic areas by focusing on different areas and implementing strategies involving human resources practices comprising of attraction, selection, training and development, and motivation of employees from different workforce groups and backgrounds. Differences in generations and work attitudes are further explored leading to a greater understanding of the wants and needs of these distinct groups. Furthermore, the diversity of the workforce in the hospitality industry is discussed along with the provision of training interventions offered by organisations which include language programmes and cross-cultural training, amongst others.

The research takes a closer look at the role and meaning of HC theory and its development over the years. The role of HCI within a business environment is rationalized by emphasizing the ways of measuring it, and the amount spent in training, learning and development activities.

In addition, the appropriate and needed skills, competencies, and profile of front line employees are discussed and related training and development interventions are explained. Moreover, transfer of training is addressed and training effectiveness is discussed alongside the trainees' characteristics, the training design, and the work environment, which are also influential factors of positive transfer of training.

Perceptions of and attitudes of training within the hospitality industry are addressed showing that there is still room for improvement due to training shortages and lack of formal training policies in place. Reduction of training, lowered resources, decreases in training budgets, amongst others lead to employee high turnover and high job dissatisfaction.

Additionally, the importance of organisational and management support towards training is vital for the effective and successful outcomes of any human capital initiative. The relationship between organisational support and training is identified as a crucial component of HCI. In addition, the relationship between management support and training is also perceived as another decisive element of HCI. Training interventions and use of various training methods and techniques provided by hospitality employers are acknowledged. The location, the length, and timings of training, resources, funding, facilities, and trainers' role all form part of the logistics and adequacy of the training environment. Training intervention variations are distinct due its amount, quality, and intention. Alongside with the various training techniques either off the job, on-the-job, E-learning used for the delivery of programmes, the best training method distinguished by hospitality managers is identified as on-the-job training.

Moreover, the impact of training interventions to the individuals as well as the organisations is elaborated and training benefits are discussed ranging from employees' productivity; employees' work quality; customers' overall perception of an organisation organisational profit levels, employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities and employees' job satisfaction and retention.

This chapter concludes with the understanding of different measurements to assess ROI, the perceptions of practitioners whilst computing ROI and the importance of using these measurements to the executive board of organisations. As a result, training effectiveness allows training evaluation and follow up to take place, leading to the different measurements available for calculating ROI.

As a result, based on past literature a suggested training model is presented to guide and investigate the topic under research. Therefore, the main aim of this chapter is to establish the importance of human capital investment for front line employees in the hospitality sector.

## **2.2. EMPLOYMENT ISSUES IN THE HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM INDUSTRY.**

Tourism employment is defined from a supply-side approach as *“the tourist industry which consists of all those firms, organisations and facilities which are intended to serve the specific needs and wants of the tourists”* Leiper (1979, p.400), as cited in Riley, Ladkin and Szivas, (2002).

Tourism is described as labour intensive and consequently it is a significant source of employment even though is facing labour shortages (Deery & Jago, 2009; McCabe & Savery, 2007). It is amongst the world's top creators of jobs needing various degrees of skills which allow for quick entry into the workforce for youth, women and migrant workers (International Labour Organization, 2004). Based on the International Labour Organisation (ILO), tourism accounts for 30 per cent of the world's export services. With regards to the supply chain in this sector, one job in the core hotel, catering and tourism industry indirectly creates approximately 1.5 additional jobs in the related economy. In 2010, the sector's global economy accounted for over 235 million jobs, equivalent to about eight per cent of the overall number of jobs (direct and indirect), or one in every 12.3 jobs. The World Tourism Organisation is estimating the sector's global economy to offer 296 million jobs by 2019 (International Labour Organisation, 2010). Hence, supporting that the hospitality and tourism industry is a significant creator of jobs globally (Ladkin, 2011), either in multinational companies (MNC) such as McDonald's, Marriott, Hilton, Intercontinental (IHG), and Accor or smaller national companies (Davidson, McPhail & Barry, 2011).

Generating employment is perceived being the most straight and useful impact of tourism to the host population and country (Liu & Wall, 2005). In light of this, a criterion for comprehending impacts within the context of emerging economies is the identification of the consequence of strategies on the nature of the host populations. In addition, the involvement in tourism; and the way in which it creates job opportunities, comprises the local's knowledge, skills, and their opinions of jobs in the tourism industry (Janta, Ladkin, Brown & Lugosi, 2011; Liu & Wall, 2005).

The characteristics of labour in tourism involve numerous activities, types of establishment, employment contracts, and working arrangements (International Labour Organization, 2004). Differences are apparent between regions in a country as well as seasonality of the year (Jolliffe & Farnsworth, 2003). Due to this dynamic nature of the labour market, consisting of an increased and high labour mobility of employees between companies, different remuneration levels, and seasonality, manpower planning, as well as working conditions are major challenges faced by hoteliers (Ladkin, 2011; Riley *et al.*, 2002). Contractual employment includes different forms such as full-time, part-time, casual, and seasonal employment (Martin, Mactaggart & Bowden, 2006). For instance, seasonality affects industry employment in various forms such as seasonal employment, under-employment, and

unemployment (Jolliffe & Farnsworth, 2003) and also provides opportunities for individuals who are seeking an additional income, whilst pursuing an alternative job career through education or due to a career break (Vaugois & Rollins, 2007). However, the frequent utilization of on-call, casual, temporary, seasonal, and part-time employment is correlated to insecurity, comparatively low pay reflecting below the national average, job instability, limited career opportunities, lack of training, a high level of subcontracting and outsourcing, and a high turnover rate (Abeysekera, 2006; International Labour Organization, 2010; Soltani & Wilkinson, 2010; Sturman, 2001). Casual staffing has the advantage that a hospitality organisation needs to pay only for the actual worked hours without any further commitment, highlighting that this type of employment does not create any substantial organisational commitment (Davidson *et al.*, 2011). However, casual employees tend to have lower job satisfaction and lower extrinsic rewards (Hausknecht, Rodda, & Howard, 2009). Outsourcing is another practice that hotels adopt to ease the impact of labour shortage with main motivator factors such as cost reduction, specialist subcontracting, assessing new technology and skill, and promoting a change process (Railborn, Butler, & Massoud, 2009), mainly used in the housekeeping and public areas, as well as administrative, and human resources departments (Davidson *et al.*, 2011). However, this method consists of disadvantages such as loss of control, innovation and trust, higher transaction, monitoring and management costs, and loss of skills (Railborn *et al.*, 2009).

However, all of these characteristics vary from country to country (International Labour Organization, 2010) and despite the negative image since many hotel companies perceive their employees as ‘costs’ or ‘liabilities’ instead of ‘assets’ (Abeysekera, 2006; Lai, Soltani, & Baum, 2008), hospitality companies are in the process of commendably challenging these traditions (Hewitt & Associates, 2010). Within Canada, in 2010 the list of top 50 employers included seven hospitality organisations: Starwood Hotels and Resorts, Earls Restaurants, Marriott Lodging, Delta Hotels, Keg Restaurants, Novotel, and McDonald’s Restaurants. Consequently, hospitality organisations are committed to offer their employees a positive experience and continuously strengthen their employer brand in the process (Christensen Hughes, & Rog, 2008).

The characteristics of working conditions in the hospitality and tourism industry are unsocial with irregular working hours including split shifts, cramped working conditions, weekend shifts, nightshifts, and working during public holidays (Baum, 2006; Soltani & Wilkinson,

2010). Furthermore, other employment issues of the hospitality and tourism industry refer to the lack of career opportunities (McCabe & Savery, 2007), unfavourable management styles, and poor image as an industry (Jameson, 2000; Lucas, 1995). Moreover, poor image as an employer, lack of rewards and benefits, high labour turnover, use of expatriate labour, barriers to employment, low level of training and education (Baum, 2006; Karatepe, Awei, Karatepe, & Canoz, 2003; Karatepe & Sokmen, 2006; Magd, 2003; Peacock & Ladkin, 2002; TTF, 2006). Even more paying the least to employees who interact with customers on a day-to-day basis and depending largely on young labour to fill in their front-line requirements (Magd, 2003), gender imbalance and earnings imbalance between the two genders (Washington *et al.*, 2003), as well as strenuous physical labour (Wu, Tsai, Fey, & Wu, 2006).

The predominant conditions in the hospitality industry from an employment perspective were described as basic and low-skilled (Wood, 1997). Even more recently the industry is known to employ individuals with low specialization of skills (McCabe & Savery, 2007), with prospective for work–family conflict (Karatepe & Kilie, 2007), employment policies and schemes that focus on cost reduction and numerical flexibility (Knox & Wood, 2005), and a consequential management style that is mostly autocratic with weak communication styles (Haynes & Fryer, 2000). These conditions seem to be in conflict with the preferred working environment of new applicants of the labour pool (Maxwell, Watson, & Quail, 2004). Hence, due to the negative image of the hospitality and tourism industry there is a low standing in the occupational status hierarchy hence, the implications for career-choice, self-image, and self-esteem (Washington *et al.*, 2003), appealing less to new entrants and making it impossible for organisations to retain current employees (Deery, 2008; International Labour Organization, 2004).

On the other hand, a more positive approach to the image of the hospitality and tourism sectors is based on its diversity and its external perception of glamour, probably from the closeness to the ‘high life’, which is conflicting with perceptions of servitude and inferiority (Riley *et al.*, 2002). Despite its low status as an industry, it is one of the fastest growing sectors in the economy of many countries such as in the U.K., however a real challenge has arisen due to the lack of access to labour with the relevant knowledge, skills, and educational background to the changing labour market (Baum, 2006; Hjalager & Andersen, 2000). Presently, the sector and its informal components provide a large number of job opportunities

to workers with little or no formal training and individuals who do not want to enter long-term employment commitments such as students or young individuals who are transient to the industry (Booth & Hammer, 2007). In addition, opportunities offered to migrants as well as to workers who have family responsibilities are in the rise. Therefore, the tourism industry can provide work opportunities for those facing significant social and capability disadvantages in a manner that is limited provided by other working sectors (International Labour Organization, 2010). As Powers (1992) stated, the increased number of minority ethnic groups presents challenges such as ‘the deprived educational background’ of foreign-born minority workers, their limited understanding and use of English written and verbal skills in English speaking countries, but they also offer advantages due to their diversity of cultural and experienced backgrounds. Currently, diversity includes not only differences in race and ethnicity but other variables such as *“employees’ differences and similarities regarding gender, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnic origins and cultural backgrounds”* (Madera, 2011, p.377). Even though the industry is one of the biggest employers of immigrants, problems have arisen. Issues involve on how to attract newcomers into the industry, retention of staff, provision of adequate education, training, and largely language barriers, which carry on being present in the work environment due to the lack of English proficiency amongst immigrant employees (Jackson, 2008). Inevitably, language barriers frequently cause communication issues in the workplace (Lee & Chon, 2000), emphasizing that employees have higher chances of being involved in workplace accidents and injure themselves, because they lack the language abilities to read and understand safety rules (Azaroff, Levenstein, & Wegman, 2003; Cutting, 2012). Moreover, less health and safety incidents are reported by employees to managers due to their limited English speaking ability (Madera & Chang, 2011) and lack of training and direction from their superiors is given to immigrant employees due to their limited English skills (Castro, Fujishiro, Sweitzer, & Oliva 2006). Capps, Fix, Passel, Ost, and Perez-Lopez (2003), as cited in Madera, Dawson and Neal (2012), argued that nearly 46 per cent of migrants’ employees have limited English proficiency and about 26 per cent in the food service industry do not speak English at home. As an alternative, they choose to speak their native language such as Spanish, Chinese, or Vietnamese. However, employers who pay for English language classes seemed to have increased employee satisfaction and performance (Costen, Johanson & Poisson, 2010; Madera, 2011).



Additionally, a variety of non-standard methods of pay, often due to informal operations and an overwhelming percentage of positions occupied by females, who have family responsibilities, looking after elderly as well household chores, add to the stressful working conditions of the industry. These working conditions involve a strong link between work life and the concerned individuals (International Labour Organization, 2004; Pratten, 2003). Moreover, in Western countries the hospitality industry employs more female staff than male since women can be employed on a part-time basis due to their family commitments or engagement with jobs that offer flexible working hours (Riley *et al.*, 2002). The study conducted by Davies, Taylor and Savery (2001) using a survey of accommodation providers in Western Australian establishments based on 140 respondents showed that female employees occupied 60 per cent of jobs within the front office and only 40 per cent of jobs were occupied by male employees. In comparison to the F&B department 90 per cent of positions were filled by females and only 10 per cent of positions were occupied by male employees, reinforcing the concept that women tend to work more in operational roles whereas male tend to occupy more of management roles. In addition, a study conducted in Singapore, showed that Asian female managers are restrained to further develop their careers to an executive level due to glass-ceiling, work-family conflict, lack of networks and family supports (Li, 2001). Furthermore, it is evident that men tend to receive higher earnings than women on average (Blau & Kahn, 2006) which is based on the human capital explanation of gender earnings gap since women possess less HC than men (Thrane, 2008). Reasons supporting this notion are based on the fact that women will be out of the workplace due to maternity leave, marriage (Li, 2001) and traditional division of labour within the family and therefore, their accumulation of work experience is slower than men, resulting in lower earnings (Polachek, 2006).

In the past, the profile of the labour force was characterized by an increased number of minorities in the workforce, lack of basic literacy and numerical skills, inexperienced college graduates at the work place and a growing number of older people re-entering, remaining in or entering the labour force (Lucas, 1995). Lack of skills, appear not to be an obstacle for the labour force to enter the industry, since the nature of skills for front-line non managerial employees can be easily learned ‘on the job’ and rely on ‘on the job training’ (Riley *et al.*, 2002). This view is still evident in developing countries with low levels of education and minimum local labour force (Vujic *et al.*, 2008). “*Lack of quality personnel in many areas, and without high-quality personnel equates to no high –quality tourism*” (Vujic *et al.*, 2008,

p.206). These series of problems including low quality and low skilled employees, imbalanced allocation of human resources, as well as low level of training, were also apparent in 2003, in countries such as China which is a developing tourist destination supporting more than 38.9 million jobs (Hai-yan & Baum, 2006). Yet, the tourism industry faces the challenge of recruiting and retaining a skilled labour force (Martin *et al.*, 2006). Labour turnover is nearly double in comparison with other industries and the skills gaps between employees are greater than in any other industry (Booth & Hamer, 2007; Martin *et al.*, 2006). However, public policy in different countries focuses “*on the development of what are seen as a high skill employment and business environment*” (Baum, 2002, pp.343-344). Concurrently, developing economies also depend to an extent on an alternative economy based not only on “*high skills*” but also on what is described as “*low skills*” jobs within sectors of the hospitality and tourism industry (Baum, 2002).

Becton and Graetz (2001) findings showed that employees in the tourism and hospitality industry might need upgrading their skills in areas such as business, hospitality, management, language and culture, sales and services. Three sources for acquiring the training consisted of external schemes such as government labour market programmes, internal methods such as on-the-job and mentoring, and industry-based methods including workshops and conferences. Similarly, the main detected shortages in the tourism sector are the lack of elementary knowledge and skills in respect to tourism products and services, target fields, marketing, selling, customer orientation, electronic data input through on-line channels and the Net. Nevertheless, the lack of skills has been addressed in different parts of the world such as Australia, Hong Kong, UK and USA through the development of education and training in hospitality and tourism (Baum, 2007) and furthermore, the educational and training investment being shared between the public sector and private companies (Baum, 2006). For instance, in India, there were 180 institutions offering certificates, diplomas, and degrees in hotel management delivered in English with focus in areas such as F&B operations, Housekeeping and Front Office. The number of graduates was approximately 10,000 students entering the labour force hoping to pursue a career in hospitality management (Jauhari, 2006).

In the 90s, Shaw and Williams’s findings pointed out that the labour force attracted to the industry was due to lack of job opportunities in the local labour market. Benefits such as provision of accommodation, transportation, additional income (tipping) and meal allowances

provided a valuable trade-off for low wages and insecure jobs (Shaw & Williams, 1994). Similarly, another study conducted by Davies *et al.* (2001) in hotels, motels, resorts and inns in Western Australia, based on a sample of 140 respondents working in areas such as front office, food and beverage, housekeeping, and management/administration, supported that 50.5 per cent of the respondents stated that their employees' wages were above the industry standard. Overall 52.7 per cent of the accommodation establishments provided some form of additional benefit(s) to their employees. The types of salary supplementation provided by the hotel establishments are in form of subsidised accommodation 38.6 per cent; subsidised meals 44 per cent; subsidised transportation/travel 15.2 per cent; medical benefits 1.1 per cent; dry cleaning/uniforms 6.6 per cent; and phone supplements 1.1 per cent. The findings indicated that there is an apparent range of benefits available to suitable staff, but the availability varied throughout the organisations based on the seniority in the functional departments and type of employment category of employees. At present hospitality organisations irrespectively of their size, operating seasonal, who are offering as part of employees' remuneration package accommodation and food must ensure that such physical facilities and services are in good conditions. Otherwise, poor physical dormitories, staff cafeteria, and bathrooms may pass the message to employees as not being appreciated or looked after resulting in employees' demotivation, job dissatisfaction, and increased turnover (Kusluvan *et al.*, 2010).

Furthermore, HR professionals are classifying hospitality employees into their generational groupings due to different work attitudes (Davidson *et al.*, 2011) and are adjusting HRM practices to ensure that talents, skills and values of all employees are used to assist in the delivery of high-quality products and services (Noe *et al.*, 2012). The employee demographics consist of four generations: Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X and Millennials. The current workforce is diverse, concerning not only gender, racioethnicity, culture and work styles, but also in connection to age (Kapoor & Solomon, 2011).

Having a closer look at the generations, the "Silent Generation" or also known as "Traditionalists" born between 1925 and 1945, tend to be uneasy provoking the status quo and authority. They treasure earnings and work security and they place more emphasis on what is better for the team, rather than what is better for the individual (Artley & Macon, 2009). Although they lack to a certain extent familiarization with new technology, those who have acquired the IT skills are among the fastest-growing group of Internet users (Dahlroth, 2008). In regards to their communication style, their preferences tend to line over simple,

direct, and concise style such as direct mail or any other forms of written communication (Dahlroth, 2008).

“Baby Boomers” born between 1946 and 1964, appreciate incentives for work achievements, prospects to learn new things, commendation, acknowledgment, and time with the boss. They tend to be committed and are keen to sacrifice personally and professionally with the intention of achieving triumph (Glass, 2007). They tend to respect authority and hierarchy because it reflects on the values in which they were brought up with (Gursoy, Maier, & Chi, 2008) and they have a sense of feeling younger than they are (Lehto, Jang, Achana, & O’Leary, 2006). In regards to communication, they have embraced technology, from e-mail to blogs and place high emphasis on networking in their personal as well as professional lives (Gursoy *et al.*, 2008).

“Generation X” born between 1965 and 1980, faced the breakdown of key institutions such as marriage, family, companies, and the economy (Artley & Macon, 2009). Consequently, they have a tendency to be self-reliant, and have strong self-management skills (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007). They prefer to work alone instead of being parts of teams, are good in multi-tasking but lacking mainly interpersonal skills (Gursoy *et al.*, 2008). They highly value work-life balance and are not prepared to sacrifice their personal time for the organisation (Gursoy *et al.*, 2008). By seeing family members made redundant the feeling of job insecurity is quite high and therefore they have little tolerance for bureaucracy and rules, time and attendance (Gursoy *et al.*, 2008).

“Millennials” or also known as Generation Y (Gen Y) born between 1981 and 1995, are keen on the latest technology, are determined and result oriented and pursue meaningful work (Hira, 2007). “Millennials” desire to be the centre of attention, valued, and engaged (Noe *et al.*, 2012). *“Millennials” work to live and value a healthy work-life balance while “Baby Boomers” live to work* (Noe *et al.*, 2012, p.38). They also have a different appearance with piercings, tattoos, and depend on electronic gadgets such as iPods, smart phones and laptops (Hira, 2007). This generation is highly educated, technologically advanced, and ethnically diverse (Spiro, 2006). Their communication style is based on social networking websites, text messaging, and desire instant feedback and acknowledgment, but they are also perceived as having poor communication and problem-solving skills (Artley & Macon, 2009; Dahlroth, 2008).

Chen and Choi (2008) have also investigated the generational differences in hospitality employees and their findings support that amongst 15 work values, way of life, and achievement ranked as the most important for all generational groups. Millennials and Generation Xers ranked supervisory relationship higher than Baby Boomers. Generation Xers viewed security and independence higher than the other two groups. Millennials ranked economic return as one of the top five work values. Altruism, intellectual stimulation, security, independence, and economic return were ranked differently, nevertheless altruism ranked reasonably high amongst all generational groups. On the lowest rankings, aesthetic and associates were viewed as least important for all three generations and Millennials ranked management as one of the lowest work values.

**Table 2.1: Work attitudes based on different generations.**

<b>Attitudes</b>	<b>Traditionalists 1925 -1945</b>	<b>Baby Boomers 1946-1964</b>	<b>Generation X 1965-1980</b>	<b>Generation Y 1981-1995</b>	<b>Generation Z 1996-2009</b>
Respect for elders	Automatic	Automatic	Is polite	Only if earned	
Professional respect	Loyal to one company	Tenure	Performance	Qualifications	
Change	Slow to adapt it	Resist it	Accept it	Want it	
Leadership	Directive, command and control	Hierarchical	Cooperative	Collabourative	
Training	Only if necessary	Only if a problem	Is desirable	Is necessary and expected	
Promotions	Timeliness and Productivity input and output	Tenure	Merit	It is my right	

Source: Drake International (2006) as cited in Davidson *et al.*, (2010, p.504).

Gen Y is fundamental as new entrants to the tourism workforce (Magd, 2003; Solent & Hood, 2008). Employers have to identify what differentiate students from the rest of the

employees and managers who belong to Baby Boomers or Generation X (Rodríguez & Gregory, 2005). University students belong to 'Gen Y' having different principles, motivators, job prospects, and attitudes toward the work environment (Alsch, 2000). Additionally, they have strong work morals, are adaptable to changes, are good at multitasking, and comprehend the need of lifelong learning; therefore, they consider being a valuable employment source (Alsch, 2000). As far as Gen Y is not micromanaged, have autonomy and empowerment, work performance will increase alongside the adequate provision of training. However, training students who are employed in the hospitality industry in comparison to training full-time staff has its own disadvantages. For instance, training is more time consuming and complicated since four part-time employees are needed to perform the job of one full time employee (Kathman & Kathman, 2000). Furthermore, students are less committed to their occupation (Kathman & Kathman, 2000) and have less knowledge in regards to the business operations (Neumann *et al.*, 2001). Praise and feedback should be also provided to Gen Y employees on a frequent basis (Gursoy *et al.*, 2008). Solent and Hood (2008) also considered the influence of Generation Y individuals entering the hospitality industry and the expectations of this generational group includes self-actualization, intrinsic benefits, a work environment that is fostering and understanding of social connections and opportunities, all of which hospitality employment has the prospective to provide for this group.

Each generation is formed based on its experiences, which results in numerous strengths to the workforce. Therefore, opportunities for individuals and encouragement so they can contribute and be productive are key contributors to a desirable work environment. Hence, managers should ensure that the working environment meets the needs, wants and expectations of all employees, irrespective of the group to which they belong to (Spiro, 2006).

Therefore, organisations are adopting new approaches to employment trying to attract; select; train; motivate employees from different workforce groups (Solent & Hood, 2008). However, Kusluvan *et al.* (2010, p.177) concluded, "*HR practices in the tourism and hospitality industry are still unprofessional, underdeveloped, and inferior when compared to other industries and are not practiced in a way that generates employee commitment, satisfaction and motivation*".

### **2.3. DEFINING HUMAN CAPITAL (HC) THEORY AND HUMAN CAPITAL INVESTMENT (HCI) AND ITS IMPORTANCE TO THE ORGANISATION AND ITS EMPLOYEES.**

Intellectual capital consists of the available knowledge within any organisation. These can be considered as the intangible resources alongside with tangible resources that form the market value of the organisation. Intellectual capital consists of three elements: the human capital, the social capital, and the organisational capital (Baron & Armstrong, 2007). Before HCI can be examined, it is vital to comprehend the notion of HC.

Human capital is *“the knowledge, skills, abilities, and capacity to develop and innovate possesses by people in an organisation”* (Baron & Armstrong, 2007, p.6) and it is known as the *“soft”* side of the business, since most organisations do not measure their HC based on the perception that it cannot be expressed in a monetary value (Cannon & Gustafson, 2002). HC within a business environment perceives employees as assets to the company and consists of childhood capabilities, formal schooling, and formal skills obtained on the job (Blundell, Dearden, Meghir, & Sianesi, 1999).

According to Schonewille (2001, p.158) HC is defined as *“initial education and on- and off-the-job training”*, where initial education is received by individuals who have not entered the labour market or who have shortly left the working population. On-the-job training is provided whilst employees are physically at work and off-the-job training may occur within companies, but is provided while the employee is not working in his actual job. On-the-job is recognized as being more job-related and provides more specific skills than off-the-job training (Schonewille, 2001). Moreover, HCI is associated with the amount of financial support the organization invests in training interventions for employees (Blundell *et al.*, 1999).

Moreover, past scholars have defined training, learning, education, and development in numerous ways. Training is defined as *“a planned and systematic effort to modify or develop knowledge/skill/attitude through learning experience, to achieve effective performance in an activity or range of activities. Its purpose, in the work situation, is to enable an individual to acquire abilities in order that he or she can perform adequately a given task or job”* (Buckley & Caple, 2008, p.5). Likewise, learning is defined as *“the process whereby individuals acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes through experience, reflection, study or*

*instruction*” (Buckley & Caple, 2008, p.5). Besides training and learning, education is defined as *“a process and a series of activities which aim at enabling an individual to assimilate and develop knowledge, skills, values and understanding that are not simply related to a narrow field of activity but allow a broader range of problems to be defined, analysed and solved* (Buckley & Caple, 2008, p.6). Lastly, development is defined as *“The general enhancement and growth of an individual’s skills and abilities through conscious and unconscious learning”* (Buckley & Caple, 2008, p.6).

The distinctions between training, education, and development relate mainly to the process, orientation, method, content and the level of precision involved (Buckley & Caple, 2008). Overall, there are four main characteristics in the majority of the definitions of training. According to Al-Khayyat and Engamal (1997), training is a learning experience for both the employee as well as the organisation. Moreover, training is an instrument for behavioural and attitudinal change and is involved in preparing and/or showing employees to a new set of knowledge and skills; and organisation productivity is certainly the final goal of any training system accomplished by enhancing the potential performance of employees. At present, companies are moving towards high-leverage training, which is linked to strategic business goals and objectives. In turn learning is becoming an independent phenomenon, by enabling employees acquiring knowledge at the time they need it and in the right quantity highlighting that learning is on-going rather than isolated learning activities (Davenport, 2007). Consequently learning is *“any relatively permanent change in behaviour that occurs as a result of experience”* (Robbins & Judge, 2009, p.89).

Social capital is defined by Baron and Armstrong (2007, p.6) as *“the structures, networks and procedures that enable those people to acquire and develop intellectual capital represented by the stocks and flows of knowledge derived from relationships within and outside the organisation”* and organisational capital also known as structural capital consists of all the non-human storehouses of knowledge in organisations. Edvinsson and Malone (1997), as cited in Engström *et al.* (2003, p.288) defined structural capital as *“the hardware, software, databases, organisational structure, patents, trademarks, and all organisational capabilities that support the employees’ productivity”*.

This concept of intellectual capital indicates that employees are the ones who create, apply, and preserve knowledge, which in turn this knowledge is further enriched by the interactions between them, resulting in institutionalized knowledge owned by an organisation (Baron &



Armstrong, 2007). As a result, a number of benefits are associated with this intangible form of capital consisting of increase in productivity, innovation, and overall economic progress of the organization (Blundell *et al.*, 2005).

### **2.3.1. Human Capital (HC) Theory and Human Capital Investment (HCI).**

HC Theory is a prominent economic theory of Western education, establishing the structure of governmental strategies. HC is perceived as a fundamental contributing factor of economic performance. A key strategy in defining economic performance has been the notion of seeing individuals as HC and associate factors such as hi-tech innovations, research, creativity, productivity, education and competitiveness as key economic influents (Fitzsimons, 1999). The concept of HC appeared from the acknowledgment that decisions to invest in, either by individuals or by organisations, are analogous to other investment decisions made by either one respectively known as HCI (Blundell *et al.*, 1999). Investment decisions refer primarily to education, training, health services, and other enhancements related to knowledge and health by evaluating the pros and cons (Becker, 1993). Adam Smith an economist in 1776, argued in the *Wealth of Nations* that variances between the ways of employees working styles with different educational and training levels mirrored variances in the yields essential to cover the expenses of obtaining those skills. The return of HCI could certainly be compared to returns from physical investments but limitations exist since employees are regarded as the most important asset in a learning organisation but not owned by the organisation. Based on his concept the science of HC was later formulated in 1960s. In 1961, Schultz another economist demonstrated that the return on HCI through education and training in the USA was greater than the investment in physical capital, instigating the concept of human capital (HC). Mincer (1962) suggested that the theory of HC in the form of education and schooling activities creates quality labour force; however, inequalities do exist in the income distribution due to age, schooling, and job position. Furthermore, Denison (1962) suggested that HC theory as a form of education ads to financial gains due to a developed labour force. Gary Beckers' HC Theory (1964) argued that the investment in training results from optimizing decisions made by both employees and employers; only if both parties are willing to carry the costs of training as far as they recuperate their investment. The result of this theory is that education, training combined together enhances labour workforce productivity, and it is an economic and social tool (Becker, 1964; Cohn & Geske, 1990; Mincer, 1993; Psacharopoulos & Woodhall, 1985). In 1969, Bowman

claimed that incidentals related to social services, medical as well as schooling are equivalent to investments made in physical capital. Moreover, Romer (1986; 1987) suggested that a learning organisation is one that concentrates on developing and utilizing its information and knowledge of its workforce so to build higher-valued information and knowledge, to alter conduct, and to encourage positive organisational results and improved profit. Hence, stimulus and support of individual learning leads to improved organisational behaviours (King, 2001). Furthermore, according to Romer (1990) the total stock of human capital that a business, nation, or economy has could result to a more rapid rate of growth. In 1990, Becker, Murphy and Tamura argued that there is an association between the family size and the choice to capitalize in HC, emphasizing that nations with smaller size families have spent higher amounts in HC, resulting in quicker financial growth. Elliott in 1991 explained further the HC theory by placing emphasis on quality rather than quantity of the labour supply. He expressed the decision to attain or improve skills, as an investment decision that necessitates the spending of funds now for yields in the future and highlighted that a main part of the human stock of economies takes the structure of HC (Baron & Armstrong, 2007). The norm supporting HC theory is based on the acceptance that an individual's learning capabilities have an analogous worth to other means associated with the production of goods and services (Lucas, 1988; Lucas, 1990). Once these means are successfully utilized, the effects are positive being profitable not only for the individual, but for the organization and the community as a whole (Schultz, 1961). Furthermore, HCI on individual's investment in the form of training and education are similar to business investments in equipment, hence these investments have an impact on employment and income (Becker, 1993; Blundell *et al.*, 1999; Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008). Furthermore, Becker (1993) claimed that companies capitalize in specific training in contrast to employees who capitalize in general skills referred to either general or specific training as on-the-job training offered by companies. 'General training' mainly refers to training that could be used across companies whereas 'firm-specific training' cannot be used outside the organization offering the training. By offering 'general training' employers may hold some ROI but they may be also disadvantaged once an employee quits his job and the returns are transferred to the new employer. Therefore, companies prefer not to pay for 'general training' due to labour mobility. On the other hand, individuals who receive general training and acquire general skills can move in the labour market, negotiate higher salaries, and obtain better employment (Becker, 1993). In contrast, employers are willing to invest in 'firm-specific training' since the gains can be seen in forms of increased productivity, employee retention, employee

loyalty, stronger internal labour market reducing replacement costs, and also higher salaries for the individuals (Becker, 1993). Moreover, Bontis (1996) suggested that expenses made by people and public administrations related to education and training are perceived as investments yielding future economic and non-economic returns. Nevertheless, income gains due to training depreciate significantly with the passage of time which results in decreased earnings. Hence, training should be repeated to maintain its advantages (Blundell *et al.*, 1999). Training provided by the employers has the highest effect not only on earnings but also on time in comparison to training provided from other sources ranging from 13 years compared to 8-10 years (Lillard & Tan, 1992). Moreover, HC could be expressed in terms of the individual's characteristics such as intellectuality, positive work dynamism and approach, trustworthiness and loyalty besides the capacity to learn and make use of the individual's resourcefulness, and innovation resulting in higher productivity and efficiency (Fitz-End, 2000) and quality performance (David & Lopez, 2001). The components of HC are ability, education and training, and experience (Blundell *et al.*, 1999; Sturman, 2001). This accumulated stock of HC offers incentives and prospects for additional investments in HC development, consequently emphasizing the independent nature of HC growth (Blundell *et al.*, 1999). Hence, HC Theory aims to describe the returns of education and training as methods of investment in human resources (Aliaga, 2001) with the key assumption that individuals are looked at as a form of HC formation resulting in economic and social growth (Aliaga, 2001; Becker, 1993; Blundell *et al.*, 1999). Nevertheless, many empirical studies related to inequality are based on the HC Theory arguing that inequalities in earnings exist due to differences in talents, family backgrounds (Becker & Tomes, 1984), schooling and training (Mincer, 1974), gender discrimination, race (Becker, 1993), and job complexity (Sturman, 2001).

HC is the most critical organisational asset since it is possible to offer the fundamental element of sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, 2001), hence, organisations are gradually turning their focus on their employees as a source of competitive advantage (Warech & Tracey, 2004). It is imperative to train and develop employees particularly in the hospitality industry due to the characteristics of service being intangible and inseparable (DiPietro, 2004). Employers should invest in employees so they can ensure that tasks are completed on time, consistent, and efficient resulting in high quality products and services offered to customers and allowing companies to reach their organisational goals as well as desired profit levels (DiPietro, 2004). For instance, McDonald's Restaurants and the pub

chain JD Wetherspoon are organisations that rank first on employee and management training as an approach of guaranteeing competitive advantage (Lashley, 2009).

Sturman (2001) study assessed the relationship between HC and pay for the hospitality industry in contrast to other industries. The HC requirements of each occupation were based on the U.S. Department of Labour's Dictionary of Occupational Titles. The findings showed that hospitality occupations, typically, necessitate individuals with minor levels of HC in comparison to employees from other industries. Despite the fact that HC prerequisites varied through the scale for both hospitality and non-hospitality occupations rated around 0.20 to 3.5. The mean HC level for hospitality occupations was statistically lesser than for non-hospitality occupations corresponding to 1.45 and 2.13 respectively. In regards to pay levels, Sturman (2001) used the data supported by the Economic Research Institute (ERI) and the results showed that the range for hospitality occupations was 0.11 to 2.17; and for non-hospitality occupations, the range was 0.23 to 3.14. In all industries, increases in HC were linked with rises in average pay for jobs; in the hospitality industry, disparity payments for rises in HC requirements were lesser than other industries. Pay levels between hospitality and non-hospitality occupations were moderately similar due to minimum-wage laws. The differences were superior for the high HC occupations. The hospitality industry paid approximately the same in comparison to other industries for low-difficulty occupations but for moderate-difficulty occupations paid 15 per cent less in comparison to other industries, and 22 per cent less for high-difficulty occupations. Therefore, even though, HC of hospitality occupations is essential, it depends on the level of complexity of the occupation, and due to the pay disparities between industries, the hospitality industry is facing a challenge to attract skilled level employees, resulting in increased turnover, having a negative impact on employee internal advancements, and professional development programmes (Sturman, 2001).

Furthermore, Mahroum (2007) suggested that HC management is related to three major dimensions, the ability to develop talent, to use talent and to attract talent from another place. Hence, organisations that possess and cultivate their HC outperform other organisations lacking HC (Crook, Todd, Combs, Woehr, & Ketchen, 2011). Hence, *“if an organisation can add together the total sum of its employees' skills, training, education, experience, life skills, knowledge and intuition, then the cumulative amount produced translates into real and*

*measurable value to the organisation*” (Cannon & Gustafson, 2002, p.39) proving that *“organisational development is a form of the HC formation process”* (Aliaga, 2001, p.429).

By measuring HC, an organisation is able to validate better training’s return-on- investment (ROI) as performance advances. The interest in HC also reflects a shift in thinking about ways to make best use of the whole range of abilities that employees bring to the workplace (Scarborough, 2003). However, such efforts do not guarantee that a unique formula exists that will permit companies to conclude to an exact value created by employees within the organisation (Warech & Tracey, 2004). According to Baron and Armstrong (2007), reasons for the development of methods of measuring the value of capital have been addressed. Firstly, HC represents a main component of the market worth of a business and its price. Therefore, it should be incorporated in the business financial records as a sign to investors or those considering a merger or acquisition, reflecting on the total value of a business combining its tangible and intangible assets. Secondly, the programme of action of finding measures and gathering and evaluating information focusing on the organisational improvement activities looking at what needs to be done to discover, retain, improve, and make the best use of its HC. Thirdly, measurements of the value of HC could form the foundation for resource-based HR strategies that are oriented towards the development of the organisation’s fundamental competencies. Lastly, measurements could be used to observe evolvement in accomplishing strategic HR goals and overall to assess the efficiency of HR practices (Baron & Armstrong, 2007).

### **2.3.2. The role of human capital (HC) within a business environment.**

Fundamentally, the HC Theory supported that people and countries with higher educational standards will be paid more and experience faster economic progression in comparison to less-educated people and countries (Becker, 1964; Campbell, 2006; Mincer, 1993; Piazza-Georgi, 2002). On the contrary, Baum (2002), and Cho, Woods, Jang, and Erdem (2006) concluded that highly educated employees do not demonstrate higher productivity levels than those who are less educated. The reason for this is the incompatibility between job requirements and a person’s education, which results in lowered productivity.

Nevertheless, in the case of Spain despite the fast growth in the educational level of Spanish employees, the hospitality industry has benefited by employing a highly educated workforce. Nevertheless, due to high levels of turnover, retention is lower in comparison with employees from other industries (Marchante, Ortega, & Pagán, 2007) emphasizing that employees’

experience a mismatch between their occupations and educational level (Marchante *et al.*, 2007). Even though educational mismatch is an influential element of earnings, there is no confirmation available to define to what level educational mismatch may have an effect on productivity in hospitality organisations (Marchante *et al.*, 2007). A more recent study conducted by Marchante & Ortega (2012) in the Andalusian hospitality sector with 70 Spanish hotels showed that the more productive hotels in the region are the ones who have been operating for over 12 years, who have three stars and upwards, are part of a chain, and subcontract some of the services offered to guests. Furthermore, mismatch between the obtained employee education and the education required by a job is significant in explaining variances between the hotels' and employees' productivity. The self-assessment of employees education from the questionnaire was divided into three categories: 'adequately educated' refers to education needed agrees with their attained schooling level; 'undereducated' refers to the education levels is less than that required to carry out the job; and 'overeducated' refers to level of education is greater than desired to carry out the job. The findings showed that properly educated employees are more efficient in comparison to those whose education does not fit the job. Undereducated employees are less efficient than overeducated ones and hotels with a more permanent workforce, meaning employees with an average service tenure of more than 10 years have higher performance with reference to labour productivity. Therefore, in order for hotels to extend their efficiency levels, employees' jobs have to fit their education and hence, employers should design and offer suitable training programmes, particularly to balance the education gap for uneducated employees (Marchante & Ortega, 2012).

From an organisational perspective, the main request for education and training is to guarantee a sufficient source of properly trained employees with the purpose of acquiring and sustaining higher profits for the organisations (Bates, 2001; Dessler, Griffiths & Lloyd-Walker, 2004), and for its connection to the organisational business plans (Cannon & Gustafson, 2002). Organisations request for training for their employees is dependent on several situational factors such as organisational culture, financial environment, and market structure in conjunction with the incentive arrangements in the training, staffing, and labour markets (Bates, 2001). According to labour economic models of training, the ROI in training is to increase employees' productivity (Forrier & Sels, 2003). Long, Ryan, Burke, and Hopkins (2000), as cited in O'Keefe, Crase, and Dollery (2007), argued that HC Theory forecasts that majority of the training occurs early in the individual's vocation, as an early

expenditure offers an extended period in which to pay back the investment. Furthermore, individuals who capitalized more in education will similarly capitalize more in training. Additionally, as age rises, it results to wage increments, and consequently the opportunity cost of capitalizing in HC grows with the age. Consequently, HCIs made earlier ought to have greater rate of return. Age earnings profiles usually increase suddenly at first, and then have a tendency to even out and ultimately drop. HC Theory recommends that this happen because of extended on-the-job training. Either formal or informal training, all forms of training are costly because productivity of trainees is low and stands for a selection on behalf of the employer to agree to take lesser productivity for the period of the training in expectation of greater productivity in future, and from the trainers' perspective informal training involves higher commitment (O'Keefe *et al.*, 2007).

A study conducted by Enz (2001) in cooperation with the Center for Hospitality Research at Cornell and the Cornell European affiliate (IMHI) in 25 countries with 170 respondents in management positions showed that the main issue referred to the utilization of HC. The most often area of concern as recorded by 57 per cent of respondents related to human resources issues such as attracting, keeping hold of employees, inspiring, training and developing the current and future industry's workforce. Attracting talent to the hospitality industry is the area of greatest concern in influencing HC, irrespectively of the managers' location globally. At the operational level, the main areas of distress are concentrated on employing talented employees and getting them ready by providing training to acquire the essential skills to meet guests' expectations. The difficulties managers came across in attracting talent are because of the industry's low wages, extended working hours, and periodic fluctuations. Another issue of concern is the quality and uniformity of training, as soon as employees are hired. The shortage of strong employees' skills and the requirement for further training were of a great significance to the European managers, whereas U.S. managers expressed higher concerns linked to labour shortages because of low unemployment rates. For U.S. managers, increasing remuneration and employee self-confidence were major issues than for managers in Europe. Managers who mentioned worries with compensation recommended that the industry does not pay fairly and fails to utilize remuneration as a way of appealing to and holding talented people. On the other hand, managers in Europe were concerned about governmental rules reducing the workweek up to 35 hours, and ways to stabilise wages and hour rules with the industry's extensive hours and non-stop operations. Facilitating to get ready employees by investing in training look as if is in clash with more demanding short-term goals such as

managing day-to-day crises and arranging adequate workforce coverage. Some managers accuse owners who are unsuccessful in appreciating the significance in investing in employees because of their bottom-line prominence as a cause of struggle. Others assign the issues of being unsuccessful to develop and train employees as the outcome of old-style and foreseeable senior managers who underestimate employees and think of them as short-term expenses. A number of managers fear that the investment in people will be unsuccessful to secure a return in view of the complexion of the industry and the effort of selecting the industry as a sustainable profession. Professionalism and career prospects for managers were also mentioned amongst other main concerns. Managers sensed that influential people in the industry are short of a vision of the future that encompassed improving the career opportunities for middle managers. Many believed that management-education and training programmes are insufficient and poor in most corporations and that the industry had done a mediocre job of creating the example as to why a gifted employee should stay in the industry discouraging young managers to stay within the industry (Enz, 2001).

Consequently, HCI in a form of employee training is crucial in several ways since it increases productivity while employees are equipped with professional knowledge and experienced skills. Furthermore, it increases employees' motivation and innovation, and assists employees to recognize the importance of their job roles within the organization (Kovac, 2008; McClelland 2002).

### **2.3.3. Reporting framework of human capital initiatives.**

HC Theory emphasizes practical issues concerning employee resourcing, development and reward, quantifying the value of people, assessing HR processes, organisational learning, and knowledge management (Baron & Armstrong, 2007). Therefore, in accordance with the report produced by the Centre for Business Performance at Cranfield School of Management (2002) for the Council for Excellence in Management and Leadership (CEML) a generic set of reporting standards applicable to all organisations were grouped under range of intangibles consisting of morale, motivation, investment, long-term development, and external perception. The measures proposed by the CEML report showed flexibility from an organisational perspective and hence, suitable for internal reporting but there is a problematic area of external reporting where a comparative analysis with other organisations could be difficult to perform (CIPD, 2003). In addition frameworks for the external reporting of HC could include reporting against the norms of HR practice; the financial valuation of HC, and



qualitative indices of HC (Aliaga, 2001; Scarborough & Elias, 2002). Three main types of human resource accounting models could be used to measure HC; cost models which refer to the historical, attainment, opportunity costs of human assets; HR value models which join non-monetary behavioural with financial economic value models; and financial models which compute discounted estimates of future earnings. These models aim to compute the contributions that employees make to organisations by getting the most out of pay expenditures (Bontis, Crossan, & Hulland, 2002; Pfeffer, 2001).

Past studies have established relationships between HR practices and business outcomes. Measuring the change in behaviour because of training interventions can be performed through the use of 360-Degree appraisal feedback process, performance, E-learning-satisfaction evaluation system (PLS), and balanced scorecard (BSC) (Rowden, 2005). Becker's, Huselid's and Ulrich's (2001) study, acknowledged a strong relationship between the HR function referring to HR practitioners with strategic aptitudes, the HR system referring to high performance, strategically lined up policies and practices and employee behaviours referring to strategically dedicated competencies, motivations and linked behaviours. As a result, the authors recommended that organisations should develop a strategic HR measurement system also known as HR Scorecard (HRSC), which demonstrates HR's impact on business performance. HRSCs have gained popularity and organisations are implementing them so to validate HCIs. Kaplan and Norton tie the HR scorecard to the BSC, which was developed, in 1996, and it is a management tool to reinforce HRs strategic influence in the organisation (Lockwood, 2006).

The BSC follows the key elements of a company's strategy using both financial and operational measures. This approach facilitates to ensure that all key performance measures are assessed in addition to ROI concerns (Brown, 2005). Past studies suggested that one of the most attractive frameworks in order to measure service economics is based on the service-profit relationship (Heskett, Jones, Loveman, Sasser, & Schlesinger, 1994; Warech & Tracey, 2004). This model suggested that capital spent in employees, including rewards, incentives and recognition programmes are associated with employees' individual performance outcomes, resulting in quality and productivity enhancements that consequently produce upper levels of service quality at lesser costs (Heskett *et al.*, 1994; Tews & Tracey, 2009). Consequently, affecting positively guest satisfaction and loyalty, operational efficiency, increased revenues, and profitability (Heskett *et al.*, 1994), assisting managers' concentration on the drivers of organisational performance rather than just the results of performance (Tews

& Tracey, 2009). In order to put in place this model, a BSC is utilized as a form of measurement aiming to translate the mission and vision statement of a company into a set of performance measures (Heskett *et al.*, 1994) with hotel companies utilizing effectively this measurement such as Hilton Hotels and Marriott franchisee White Lodging Services (Denton & White, 2000).

Nevertheless, past studies addressed the lack of measuring the ‘learning and growth’ dimension of the BSC, in regards to employee capabilities, employee lifestyle and well-being, following up tools of employee performance, motivation of employees, and goal setting of employees (Evans, 2005; Kaplan & Norton, 1996). A study conducted by Evans (2005) focusing on the UK’s Northeast hospitality sector within medium to large hotel establishments found that in regards to financial performance most hotel units are measuring actively indicators such as total operating revenue, revenue per available room, and expenses versus budget. From a customer’s perspective, hotels identify customer satisfaction rankings and numbers of complaints on a monthly basis, but quite a large number of hotels never take into account benchmarking measurements such as mystery guest evaluations and repeated guests. On a monthly basis highly active hotels, measure their responses to customer complaints and service errors. The innovation and learning perspective showed that hotels consider employee appraisals, employee training programmes, and employee improvements areas with only 40 per cent of respondents considering this category quarterly. Therefore, BSC was considered as a framework mainly used for financial measures with areas for improvement regarding the learning and growth dimension. Moreover, McPhail’s, Herrington’s and Guilding’s (2008) study conducted in the hotel industry interviewing 14 human resource (HR) managers of different hotels in the Gold Coast, Australia found that HR managers were lacking familiarity with the BSC tool due to lack of understanding, correct implementation and right usage. In addition, the ‘learning and growth’ dimension was not measured despite being important for higher management. None of the interviewees were familiar with the term ‘learning and growth’ and therefore lack of monitoring the sub elements of this dimension was apparent. Hence, supporting that hotel companies have not yet adopted BSC in a systematic manner rather more in an *ad hoc* manner and HR managers should have a clearer understanding of the BSC framework so to gain full benefits of the system.

Furthermore, HR professionals need to embrace the use of KPIs in order to assess and quantify areas of the businesses in order to identify what is important for the organization’s

success and achievement of long-term business objectives. The traditional metrics including head count, time-to-fill, and turnover are expanding to KPIs that line up with corporate objectives and greater stakeholder value such as talent management, employee engagement, and high performance demonstrating a strong understanding between HR practices and business success. In addition, KPIs support the credibility of the HR department; prove HR value, and nurture appreciation, recognition and partnership with senior and corporate management. A number of organisations also use KPIs to boost their image as an employer of choice (Lockwood, 2006). In relation to the Top KPIs of 2010, the report compiles the most popular 25 KPIs used by HR departments referring to employee turnover measuring retention, management-to-staff ratio assessing the levels of workforce, employment brand strength measuring recruitment, average time to fill a vacant position assessing recruitment, and employee engagement index measuring retention (Brudan, 2011).

Moreover, the 360-degree feedback, which is another tool to evaluate HCI, uses employees' input across all levels of the organisation to assess performance, and training programmes. An effective 360-degree feedback process enhances employee performance, and consequently improves ROI for the organisation. For that reason, it can be seen as a method used to identify the benefits of training (Rowden, 2005). In the case illustrated by Santos and Stuart (2003), all employees had a formal appraisal scheme connected to a reward system based on performance-related pay, salary raises, and bonuses. Furthermore, during the appraisal process line managers identified employees' training needs but yet the acquisition and application of the new competencies and skills were not rewarded or recognised.

Lastly, the PLS Evaluation System is perceived as a thorough and yet flexible evaluation system by carrying out fundamental questions, techniques, and reporting results as functions of every evaluation. The overall financial results goal of the model is to ensure benefits exceed the costs by 2:1 ratio. If the 2:1 ROI goal is reached, it is translated that the programme achieved 100 per cent of its target (Rowden, 2005).

## **2.4. TRAINING, LEARNING, EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM INDUSTRY.**

Employees in the tourism should be provided with formal, non-formal, and informal education so to perform their jobs to its full potential (Vujic *et al.*, 2008). Tannenbaum and Yukl (1992) suggested that training is used in organisations to enhance employees' current

job skills, prepare them for career progression, instruct new or changing work-related requirements, and make available entry-level socialization. Overall, the improvement of knowledge and training for tourism occupations should entail association with the workplace; use of the model of instructorship; full and fair support to all levels of employees; communication; ease of understanding of training plans by all employees; and targets and standards for evaluation of results and outcome of trainings being established (Vujic *et al.*, 2008).

Due to the skill shortages within the hospitality industry, according to Jameson's (2000) study two of the indicators crucial towards a systematic approach to training are the development and implementation of a training plan/policy and a specific budget for training. Training in small size organisations is on an informal basis. Only 11 per cent of 1103 companies had a formal training plan in place. In regards to training budgets, only 12 per cent of the firms have them in place. Furthermore, training methods are in the form of on-the-job training that suggested casual and primitive methods occasioning in an unimportant progress in the combined competency level (Jameson, 2000). From an organization's perspective training is an activity that is required in order to ensure that employees have the required skills in order to undertake their jobs effectively. Hence, a need for training is possible to be triggered by 'drivers'. For instance, these drivers relate to the recruitment of new staff; changes in the business environment such as the development of a new product or service; changes in technology in the workplace; initiation of new regulations relating to work procedures as well as fundamental changes in the organization (Johnson, 2002).

According to Baruch (2004), training is critical for companies who form part of the hospitality and tourism industry with the intention that they might embrace their own training and learning philosophy against competitors, and prosperity. Competition is increasing aggressively and rivals must upgrade their operations in order to satisfy customers who expect and demand a high service and hassle free travel experience (Hudson, Hudson, & Miller, 2004). Therefore, is recognized that the rate of learning must exceed the rate of change (Middleton, 2003). Furthermore, the development of skilled employees is essential but not enough for improved competitiveness (Blake *et al.*, 2006). On the other hand, insufficient training or badly designed training programmes for front-line employees, is an obstacle to the prosperity, growth, and development of these companies (Deng, 2009; Taner, 2001). Ryan (2008) proposed that three scenarios could evolve if under-training takes place

within an organisation due to this type of unwillingness. Firstly, the employee will be unable to assist a customer in the expected way, secondly the customer will be dissatisfied with the level of service provided with, and thirdly the employee will feel anger and frustration, which will lead further reducing the service level (Ryan, 2008).

A study conducted by Conrade *et al.*, (1994) based on hotel companies showed that only 23 per cent of the respondents spend more than one per cent of payroll in training for white-collar and technical workers, whilst production and service personnel mostly receive considerable less training. It was noted that hotel companies invest most of their training budgets on line employees. However, the study did not fully explain whom hotel companies are training or what kind of training the employees receive. Furthermore, it was revealed that 61 per cent of hotel companies' training expenditure is offered to new employees so to develop their basic knowledge and skills needed for the job. Consequently, only 39 per cent of training budget was allocated for existing employees. In turn, so to assess the impact of providing more training to newcomers, 93 per cent of respondents stated that training programmes focused to improving their skills, knowledge, and behaviour, which was a driving force for them to stay within the company. Whereas 63 per cent of respondents felt that, they will leave the company if they were not engaged in long-range training programmes, emphasizing that training discourages turnover. In addition, 81 per cent of the money invested on training of existing employees aimed to improve employees being better at their current job whilst only 19 per cent was dedicated on training of new employees for new positions or responsibilities. Therefore, based on the above findings the authors concluded that the hospitality industry might not fully acknowledge the value of cross training and personnel development in reducing employee turnover (Conrade *et al.*, 1994). Even more, recent research indicates that other industries provide higher degree of training effort in comparison to the hospitality industry despite its numerous benefits (Croner, 2004).

#### **2.4.1. Training Needs Assessment (TNA).**

A training needs assessment (TNA) is used to define whether training is the right answer to a workplace issue (Cekada, 2010) and according to Barbazette (2006, p.5) it is "*the process of collecting information about an expressed or implied organisational need that could be met by conducting training*". In effect, data is gathered and analyzed so a training plan can be produced. The assessment thereafter concludes the need for training, it detects what training

is needed, and it looks at the type and scope of resources required to conduct a training programme (Bras & Rodrigues, 2007; Sorenson, 2002; Thomas & Long, 2001). Organisations conducting a TNA aim to find answers and information in regards to optimal performance or knowledge; actual performance or knowledge; feelings of trainees and other key employees; roots of the re-occurring issues or problems; and answers to those issues or problems. Nevertheless, training will not solve issues related to poor system design, lack of resources or low levels of staffing (Sorenson, 2002). Conducting a TNA is also dependent on the size of the organization; where larger organisations have a more systematic approach to training as opposed to smaller (Thomas & Long, 2001). Various tools exist to conduct a TNA such as the Instructional System Design (ISD) and the ADDIE model incorporating analysis, design, development, implementation and evaluation (Noe *et al.*, 2012). In addition, organisations have to look into the “pressure points” that suggest if training is actually needed. These pressure points consist of performance deficiencies, introduction of new technology, internal or external customer requests for training, job redesign, and new legislation, changes in customer preferences, higher performance standards, and creation of new jobs, business growth, global business expansions, new products or services or employees’ lack of skills (Noe *et al.*, 2012, p. 276).

#### **2.4.2. The role of human resources department.**

Given the pressures and changes that businesses confront, HR departments are under stressful situations to rethink, redefine, and reevaluate their job functions. HR professionals have been asked to substantiate their value to the business plan. However, it is still perceived as a cost centre department, unnecessary, and very incapable to support the bottom line. Despite the presence of HR professionals in top positions within organisations, there is an existing perception that those appointments are simply an outcome of executive management feeling that is the correct thing to do, without having a clear understanding as to why or what the probable payoff and contribution could be in future. HR professionals have a different role and function as well as resources to show their contribution to the bottom line and by measuring, understanding, and communicating their activities related to HC management practices on organisational performance (Warech & Tracey, 2004).

HR departments have been trying to justify their expenditures for employee training to upper management as well as accountants so they could continue designing training programmes (Choi & Dickson, 2009; Phillips & Phillips, 2005). Some hospitality companies do not

believe that training pays off (Choi & Dickson, 2009) due to high employee turnover rates (Kuruüzüm, Çetin, and Irmak, 2009), and negative perceptions towards HCI (Cannon & Gustafson, 2002; TTF, 2006). Therefore, since hospitality organisations make a significant high investment, HR and learning professionals should be able to apply quantitative measurements that address how training will assist the unit and the organisation attain its goals, whether training is worthwhile, and how training compares to the other organisational initiatives (Bahlis, 2008). The American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) report showed that, only eight per cent of U.S. companies collect data and calculate their ROI for training (Gomez-Mejia *et al.*, 2007). Therefore, it is not surprising that training departments may be the first victims of cutbacks during economic recession. Training programmes can only be justified if they add to the business profits, otherwise, if the results are not quantifiable then funding is rejected (Choi & Dickson, 2009) and hospitality and tourism organisations continue to do more with less resources (Wang & Wang, 2009).

#### **2.4.3. Skills and competences of the workforce in the hospitality industry.**

In accordance with the report by SHRM and WSJ.com/career (2008) in critical skills needs and resources for the changing workforce, employers are lacking in describing the necessary skills and capabilities they expect from the workforce and the U.S. educational structure is failing to produce the right quantity and quality of graduates needed to enter the labour market.

A skill is defined as *“an ability and capacity acquired through deliberate, systematic and sustained effort to smoothly and adaptively carry out complex activities or job functions involving ideas (cognitive skills), things (technical skills), and/or people (interpersonal skills)”* (BusinessDictionary.com, n.d). Ability is as *“an acquired or natural capacity or talent that enables an individual to perform a particular job or task successfully”* (BusinessDictionary.com, n.d.)

In the hospitality business, it is all about the competences and qualities of employees and even more the combination of professionalism, skills, and competency development (Teare, 2011) which lead to a hotel's success and growth (McClelland, 2002). Cognitive skills consist of general intelligence whereas other skills reflect on specific capacities such as verbal comprehension, numerical ability, memory, and spatial ability amongst others. Besides, physical skills relate to strength, stamina, flexibility and manual dexterity (Chapman & Lovell, 2006).

According to Chapman's and Lovell's (2006) study based in the Australian competency framework within the hospitality industry, concluded that main emphasis is given to work-related skills since these skills can be objectively observed and measured whereas cognitive, attitudinal, and knowledge-based skills are overlooked. Consequently, an employee can be either competent or not competent. Moreover, they suggested that the training competency framework implies that majority of core skills acquired by trainees are generic skills in nature and therefore applicable to same job class in the hospitality industry, irrespective of the environment where the individual is employed, yet, the industry is multifaceted with many upper-scale markets, for which individuals are not equipped for. Therefore, as Vujic *et al.* (2008) argued to achieve professionalism individuals should be broad-minded and eager to learn at work and from others. The following table summarizes the required knowledge and competences of employees in the tourism industry.

**Table 2.2: Knowledge and competences by level of employees and managers.**

Knowledge and competences	Managers	Skilled co-workers	All employees
Planning and organizing	PC capability	Professional competences	Professional competences
Consumer orientation	Business planning	Problem solving	Technical skills
Communication	Managerial skills	Knowledge of working on PC	On-the-job training
Speaking foreign language	Management of changes	Knowledge innovation	Personal development
An understanding of cultures	Decision making	Management of projects and processes	Security and job safety
Teamwork	Management of human capital	Communication	Orientation towards customers and work results
Flexibility	Management of destination	Specialized competences	
Problem solving	Management of projects	Presentation skills	
Training skills	Educated to teach others	Creative and innovation	
Personnel management	Leadership		

Source: Vujic, *et al.*, (2008, p.207).



From an organisational perspective is crucial to identify the skills and competencies required by employees so to remain competitive. Companies such as Marriott International and Choice are amongst the leaders identifying competencies as a priority and assisting managers to select, develop, and coach, as well as map career paths and plan employees' succession (Chung-Herrera, Enz, & Lankau, 2003).

Even more, skills and competences are crucial for front-line positions that have direct contact with guests since front-line employees can influence customer satisfaction and service quality (Barroso, Martín, & Martín, 2004; Brownell, 2003; Constanti & Gibbs, 2005; Dean, 2004; González *et al.*, 2006; Lundberg & Mossberg, 2008; Varela & García, 2006). Hence, front-line employees need to possess a combination of skills, which add value to the delivered product (Burns, 1997; Chapman & Lovell, 2006) and to the promised service to the guests (Lundberg & Mossberg, 2008). Exchanges between customers and employees could impact things such as customers' perceptions of satisfaction, judgments of quality, long-term loyalty (Brownell, 2003) and ranking of a tourist destination (Crouch, 2011; Go & Govers, 2000; Gomezelj & Mihalic, 2008), underlining that training must be designed in line with the specific needs of the service (Valera & García, 2006). On the contrary, negative customers' impressions could result in financial losses and bad reputation for the organization (Taner, 2001).

Several studies investigating employee skills in the hospitality and service industry have classified skills into three main categories: 'hard' (Burns, 1997; Lundberg & Mossberg, 2008; Pratten, 2003), 'soft' (Baum, 2006; Becton & Graetz, 2001; Burns, 1997; Lashley, 2009; Lemmick & Mattsson, 2002), and 'aesthetic' skills (Lundberg & Mossberg, 2008; Nickson, Warhurst, Cullen, & Watt, 2003).

'Hard' skills are associated with the technical performance of hospitality work that a frontline employee needs to execute a function to established standards. These 'hard' skills comprise of wine knowledge, service skills, front desk related topics, knowledge of a certain computerized system or software (Burns, 1997; Lundberg & Mossberg, 2008; Pratten, 2003) and due to technological advancements and reliance on computers, training of hard skills such as technical knowhow with computers are even more essential (Barron, 2008).

'Soft' skills which are comprised of attitudinal aspects of work and emotional labour consist of people skills, ways to relate to people, how to be involved, get engaged, and solve issues

(Burns, 1997; Lashley, 2009; Lemmick & Mattsson, 2002). These people skills embrace guest engagement, problem solving, decision-making, verbal communication, knowledge of foreign languages and cultural divergences (Baum, 2006; Becton & Graetz, 2001; Burns, 1997), therefore responsiveness, courteousness and understanding (Lemmick & Mattsson, 2002) are paramount to front-line employees (Lundberg & Mossberg, 2008). In accordance with the findings of Lemmick and Mattsson (2002) service firms should provide behavioral and motional training to employees to deal with their feelings (Grandey, 2003) and be taught behaviors that integrate aspects of empathy on the basis of critical service encounters such as the importance of facial expressions, gestures, body movements, and verbal communication. Several organisations train employees to utilize service scripts which define verbal specifications such as the correct terms, words and phrases, and stimulate behavioral rules including greeting customers in a specific manner (Grandey, 2003). Furthermore, smiling, or making eye contact for employees to follow (Victorino, Verma, & Wardell, 2008) or giving guidelines as to when and how tasks should be carry out with the scope of raising the probabilities of positive customer experiences (Victorino & Bolinger, 2012).

Employee personality seems to be growing in importance as a selection decisive factor for tourism and hospitality organisations due to its role on employees' attitudes, behaviour, (Kusluvan, 2003), and employee performance (Kusluvan *et al.*, 2010). Similarly, Chapman and Lovell (2006) concluded that employee recruitment in smaller size organisations is often based on personality and grooming, instead of merit resulting in lack of job satisfaction, low job performance, and increased staff turnover. Whereas, larger size hospitality organisations prefer to hire internally, since employees understand the organisational culture, and are trained in the expected work ethics, attitudes and conduct. A study carried out in the food-service industry found significant correlations between basic personality characteristics such as emotional stability, conscientiousness, agreeability and the need for activity and self-rated and supervisory-rated performance ratings of the service employees, facilitated by customer oriented employees (Brown, Mowen, Donavan, & Licata, 2002).

Lastly, 'aesthetic' skills according to Nickson *et al.* (2003, p.197) are qualities that employers are concentrating on such as "*personal presentation, personality and behaviour, physical appearance, personal grooming, voice, accent and communication, and style or image*". Aesthetic labour was found to generate a distinctive image and be responsible for a competitive advantage in the hospitality industry (Nickson *et al.*, 2005). In line with a national survey of skills needs in hotels, restaurants, pubs and bars conducted by the

Hospitality Training Foundation (HtF), the national training organisation for the industry in the UK, 85 per cent of employers stated their employees' personal presentation and appearance are very important. Personal presentation and appearance was classified third, making it more significant than even employees' ability to adhere to instructions, exhibit initiative or have communication skills (HtF, 2000). As Lundberg and Mossberg (2008) suggested once frontline employees are in their assigned departmental uniform, they know what is required from them, how they have to portray themselves as hotel representatives, keep the right posture while speaking to a guest, and even for female front-line employees how much face make up is suitable to put on.

'Hard' skills can be acquired through formal training such as high school in hospitality, vocational educational and to a limited degree, through performing the job. 'Soft' skills can be learned through Internal Word of Mouth (IWOM) and observations of fellow colleagues' interactions with other customers and 'aesthetic' skills through employees' interactions with customers (Lundberg & Mossberg, 2008). In the hospitality industry, individuals should possess a set of skills such as interpersonal skills, personality, and appearance in terms of the ability to access and then maintain their employment (Belt, Richardson & Webster, 2002; Burns, 1997). Belt *et al's* (2002) study was based in call centres in which they demonstrate that despite good IT skills but due to poor social skills, individuals failed to get the jobs emphasizing the importance of generic skills and communication skills associated with employability and the inconsistency between training providers and call centre employers on the subject of skill requirement. Good communication skills such as customer focus being 'lively' and 'chatty', bubbly personalities were crucial for the role as well as people skills including 'team spirit', 'sociable' and supportive 'coaching culture'. People skills were on top on the list, emphasizing that individuals who demonstrate the ability to communicate with, motivate, coach, and provide support tend to carry out more effectively their duties and responsibilities.

Hence, it is quite hard and biased to determine which skills are particularly advantageous for certain front-line service jobs (Baum, 2006) nevertheless, most front-line related jobs require a combination of 'hard', 'soft' and 'aesthetic' skills resulting in front-line employees possessing multiple skills (Kelliher & Riley, 2002; Vallen & Vallen, 2009). Kelliher and Riley (2002) proposed that the acquisition of multiple skills through a training intervention results in higher employee loyalty, sense of meaningful job, which in turn increases

employees' satisfaction, sense of empowerment, and underpins employees' desire for further training. Companies initializing the importance of multiskilling have to integrate the concept of multiskilling in their philosophy and managerial support towards training and it should be apparent and reflective in the organisational policies and procedures (Kelliher & Riley, 2002).

Front-line employees are expected to interact with customers and are required to handle a number of requests (Karatepe & Uludag, 2008), which makes it impossible to substitute the human factor with some other factor of production (Taner, 2001). From the arrival of customers, a close face-to-face interaction is expected to be developed between customers and front-line employees who work in operational departments. Therefore, it becomes vital to build up a quality consciousness in these employees towards providing quality service to the customers (Taner, 2001), highlighting the need of technical and interpersonal skills by front-line employees (Lin & Mattila, 2010). According to Tsaor and Lin (2004) there is a positive relationship between training and higher levels of employee service behavior in tourist hotels. Employees who also experienced positive HRM practices in relation to recruitment/selection; compensation/benefits; training/development may consequently be 'paying back' their company by being more positive, polite and caring towards customers (Tsaor & Lin, 2004). In addition, the willingness of employees to participate in quality improvement efforts and their acceptance of further responsibilities due to the organisational culture that emphasizes universal responsibility for quality is expected. Hence, organisations with strong beliefs in quality service should commit to train employees in service standards to achieve quality and value (Taner, 2001) and as suggested by Peterson (2006) quality consciousness is a useful training topic for assisting employee development and company operations. Therefore, training is inappropriate if it only focus on subjects that increase output or efficiency, but not customer service (McColl-Kennedy & White, 1997).

Face-to-face interactions point out the degree of positive or negative service encounters. Organisations request customers to evaluate the service through the use of direct-feedback systems. The service feedback can be either direct meaning that customers express their appreciation by praising employees or object about the service received, and/or indirect such as earning a reputation for giving customers excellent service (Slåtten, Svensson, & Sværi, 2011). On the other hand, negative customer experiences can be due to complaints such as impersonal service, being treated as a number rather than a valued individual, having an issue

resolute without getting an apology, not getting responses to written complaints in a timely manner, faulty products, extensive waiting times, failed promises, unsuitable or badly applied processes, or inadequate organized resources. Consequently, all these negative experiences can lead to the failure of meeting customer expectations based on the impoliteness of employees (Slåtten *et al.*, 2011). Moreover, Tantawy and Losekoot (2000) findings supported that bad service quality was the main reason for customer complaints followed by bad staff attitude and bad product quality and similarly. Pratten's (2003) study showed that despite the different types of restaurants and similar tasks performed by waiting staff existent customer complaints were inevitable due to deficiencies in service related to low understanding of waiting staff jobs, inadequate training, and lack of work experience.

## **2.5. PERCEPTIONS OF ATTITUDES TO TRAINING WITHIN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY.**

Past studies related to training in the hospitality industry have shown a negative image. Past research has concluded that there is a shortage of training provided for hospitality staff, lack of communication, lack of quality evaluation efforts, lack of adequate resources resulting in many organisations operating without having formal training approaches in place (Baum, 2002; Lashley, 2009; Des Monk & Ryding, 2007). Moreover, training is under-funded and neglected by many hoteliers (Woods, 2003), with under-qualified managers (Hart, Stachow, Farrell, & Reed, 2007). Hence, the industry is in need of major improvements (Harris & Bonn, 2000). Despite the fact that people are considered being one of the most important resources in the service sector such as the hospitality industry, organisations who aim to reach their full potential should develop employees by ensuring they possess high-skills and high quality staff (Hai-yan & Baum, 2006). Training offered by hospitality organisations is often wasted when employees leave to pursue employment in other sectors, which is an apparent deterrent to invest more than the bare minimum in training (Solent & Hood, 2008). However, it is often said that an organisation can identify the value of training as long as there is provision of a systematic approach to training delivery and thereby obtaining its benefits (Cannon & Gufstanson, 2002). Companies investing in training also had a positive approach that training leads to success, it also forms part of the company's strategy, and adopted training focuses in a practical instead of theoretical approach highlighting the

strategic role of training (Butcher *et al.*, 2009; Nikandrou, Apospori, Panayotopoulou, Stavrou, & Papalexandris, 2008).

Hai-yan's and Baum's (2006) study of 276 hotel front office employees working in four and five star hotels in China showed that high-quality human resources are lacking in China's hotel sector. Employees were not willing to stay in their front office job roles because of the nature of work such as demanding work, low wages, and unclear career progression and promotion opportunities. Consequently, the main skills strengths of front office could be found in students either from professional schools or vocational or high schools leading to a relatively "*low educational level and low quality of workers*" in the hospitality industry (Hai-yan & Baum, 2006, p.516). Employees' uncertainty regarding hotel career and lack of promotion opportunities because of the unstructured employment and professional development system was a major concern due to the inability to plan for their progression and unclear guidance on how to reach future personal goals and career plans. Another concern was the additional need for training which is crucial for the development of employees' skills. Training provision has been mainly targeting pre-work training in contrast to training for the future focusing on more advanced skills. Hence, employees have been unable to take external programmes in front office or tourism and as a result, the required skills for front office were obtained in-house. This supports the concept that effective training is expensive and requires proficiency (Hai-yan & Baum, 2006).

On the other hand, companies such as Starbucks and Southwest Airlines have credited their success to good management and overall best human-resources practices, emphasizing employee retention and employee development (Hinkin & Tracey, 2000). Moreover, employees' retention is due to effective human resources practices where the work environment provides them opportunities to grow and develop. In turn, there is a direct reflection on the organisational profits due to the service quality offered by competent and loyal employees. Employees are perceived as assets by organisations and believe that any type of investment on people brings increased organisational benefits (Hinkin & Tracey, 2000). However, organisations can disregard training and still 'pay' a high price for losing customers due to poor standards and quality service delivery (Cannon & Gustafson, 2002). Thus, every learning solution is instigated for a specific reason such as compulsory training, addressing lack of performance, improving productivity, reducing errors, reducing operating

costs, reducing number of personnel, or introducing new processes and/or equipment (Bahlis, 2008).

Despite the positive impact of training, there are several factors contributing to the reduction of training within organisations mainly due to the financial crisis, organisational restructuring, elimination of training departments, downsizing by making redundancies and laying people off or training functions been outsourced to third parties or even shifting training back to departmental functions (Cannon & Gustafson, 2002; CIPD, 2011). The capability to confirm whether a specific training programme enhances organisational performance and employee capability defines whether a programme carries on receiving finance, and occasionally whether a trainer holds his or her job (Owens, 2006). In the hospitality industry, cutbacks refer to unfilled or completely erased from the organisational charts hotel trainers positions, budgeted training hours reduced, new hires covering shifts prior to their full training, and lack of access to new training multimedia resources (Kennedy, 2009). Another assumption is that the training department is a cost centre and not a revenue generating department hence, should be among the first line items reduced when a hotel's operating budget is cut down (Dela Cruz, 2004). However, training professionals perceive that this assumption is shortsighted since training is a required investment in the ongoing success of a hotel (Dela Cruz, 2004).

Nonetheless, any recession time should be used as an opportunity to boost employees' morale and commitment by providing them a sense of being valued and perceived as an important asset for the organization, giving companies a competitive advantage of having a higher educated workforce by keeping up with the training commitments (Daniels, 2008; Taylor, 2003). By ensuring revenue-generating training as part of management responsibility, frontline staff will be capitalizing on every opportunity to capture sales, reduce unnecessary costs, and ultimately maximize profits during recession (Kennedy, 2009). Employee performance improvement is a long-term gain and companies such as Southwest Airlines, Dell Computer, Viacom and security experts Guardsmark were among the companies that did not decrease their training provision to its workforce whereas on the contrary increased training budgets, made workforce development sessions places of inspiration, and focused on specific training (Daniels, 2008).

Training is also closely associated with the size of the firm. Consistent with the European Commission's the definition of SMEs stands for small and medium-sized enterprises. The

following table illustrates the recommendation by the Commission of European Communities of SMEs based on the two main elements; number of employees and annual turnover or balance sheet total.

**Table 2.3: Company category breakdown by size, number of employees and turnover.**

Company category	Employees	Turnover	or	Balance sheet total
Medium-sized	< 250	≤ € 50 m		≤ € 43 m
Small	< 50	≤ € 10 m		≤ € 10 m
Micro	< 10	≤ € 2 m		≤ € 2 m

Source: Commission of European Communities recommendation of 6 May 2003.

Larger size organisations are more probable than smaller size organisations to offer or subsidize formal training. Moreover, larger size organisations value the usefulness of workshops and classroom training higher than smaller size organisations (Ahlgren & Engel, 2011; Johnson, 2002; Smith & Kemmis, 2010). Larger organisations in the hospitality industry run under their operations a professional training department, and the content of training is more related to brand standards highlighting that off-the-job training delivery is perceived less suitable for industries where customer contacts drives skills development (Smith & Kemmis, 2010; Abeysekera, 2006). In contrast, in smaller size organisations training is often under-financed due to reduced budgets, less access to training, incapacity to arrange for suitable cover for those employees on training (Blake *et al.*, 2006), high training costs, and employee mobility (Ahlgren & Engel, 2011). Moreover, small organisations do not use training offered by external providers or governmental sponsored initiatives because of the unawareness of the existence of state programmes that are available to help in employee skill development (Chi *et al.*, 2008; Johnson, 2002), resulting in only a small proportion of training being carried out in further education colleges (Smith & Kemmis, 2010).

Another issue in the provision of training are the differences between branded and non-branded organisations. Branded organisations use formal training policies as a mean of complying with the requisites of brand uniformity for customers, although still within these organisations, regular training delivery through all entities is an issue (Eaglen, Lashley, & Thomas, 2000). In addition, independent owned companies consider effective trainers, since higher management identify that quality service practices allows them to sustain competitive



advantage (Lashley, 2009). Part of the hospitality industry's training agenda is the concern of de-skilling, predominantly used in the fast food industry to provide food and control labour costs to a minimum level but inapplicable to the luxury end market, since there is a need for more personalised service. Despite the provision of luxury service delivery, large, branded hotel chains feel the burden to produce a return for the shareholders and at the same time sustain the brand promise. Even if these hotel chains are outsourcing different functions, an attraction to streamline the service offered, and to satisfy owner requirements for an ROI is crucial for the hotel chain's reputation and further expansion (Cairncross & Kelly, 2008).

Training is still a major concern for developed and developing countries. Developed countries possess a pool of resources, facilities, and structures that are either privately, government, or industry-funded. The variety of programmes consists of short training sessions, certificate, and diploma programmes all through degrees and postgraduate programmes. These training and learning initiatives can be further breakdown into training that proposes formal awards handed over completion, and informal which is primarily industry-based. Both formal and informal training play an ever-rising industry role due to the global growth of the industry, employee turnover, the need for knowledge enrichment and career paths, rising legal requirements, industrial relations, personal development, and most importantly enhancement of customer service quality (Davidson *et al.*, 2011). In the current climate of constant change and increased environmental uncertainty and complexity, management as well as employees understand their limitations in regards to their capacity to deal with future demands (Sahinidis & Bouris, 2007). This is due to two main trends such as the increasing age of the workforce with Babyboomers being entitled for retirement, and the introduction and constant evolution of new technologies (Tai, 2006). There is a need for leadership and information technology skills since at the workplace there is an introduction of new technologies, such as web-based operations, computerized intelligent systems, and other task technologies (Colquitt, LePine, & Noe, 2000). Hence, the investment and increase of training budgets in organisations is critical, in order to remain competitive and maintain an adaptable and flexible workforce (Colquitt *et al.*, 2000; Tai, 2006). Therefore, employees' competencies are dependent on the adequate training provision by the employers (Santos & Stuart, 2003; Tai, 2006).

### **2.5.1. Organisational support towards training.**

Perceived organisational support (POS) has been used to analyse the employment relationship and is grounded in the social exchange theory by Blau in 1964 and psychological contract theory by Rousseau in 1990. These theories capture employees' perceptions concerning the extent to which organisations value their contributions and look after their well-being suggesting that employees who have financial expectations are least probable to be prepared to stay in their organisation (Bulut & Culha, 2010; Chambel & Sobral, 2011). Employee training and development relates to strategies, tools and procedures striving for the improvement of the ability and capability of organisational members (Hemdi & Nasurdin, 2006). From an employee perspective the main obligations towards an organisation are to complete the given tasks and duties, to safeguard the proprietary resources and organisational knowledge, and to meet the quality requests of HR for the upcoming years (Bulut & Culha, 2010; Crick & Spencer, 2010; Lee & Bruvold, 2003). On the other hand, employers' obligations to their employees include the provision of fair salaries and benefits, and conditions that permit the development and progression of employees (Coyle-Shapiro, 2002). Training relates to employee perceptions concerning the treatment received from the organisation and these perceptions link to their affective commitment (Mitlacher, 2008). Employees who consider training as a benefit, promoting their employability, have a higher commitment towards the organisation (Chambel & Sobral, 2011; Finegold, Levenson, & VanBuren, 2005; Forrier & Sels, 2003), granting employees with continuous opportunities so to develop knowledge, skills, and behaviours (Bulut & Culha, 2010; Chambel & Sobral, 2011). Therefore, organisations establish learning contracts with employees that in turn increase their employability in the labour market (Finegold *et al.*, 2005) focusing on organisational investment and commitment towards employees (Shore & Shore, 1995). In addition, employees' records of rewards, which are outcomes of several HR practices and decisions, contribute to perceived organisational support (POS) (Allen, Shore, & Griffeth, 2003). Therefore, training is an indication that employees are considered valuable for the existence and success of the organisation (Takeuchi, Lepak, Wang, & Takeuchi, 2007; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997), through the investment in employees, and the recognition of employee contributions (Allen *et al.*, 2003). If employees based their interpretation of training as a reflection of the organisation's appreciation, investment, and recognition, employees tend to perceive themselves as being part of a social exchange relationship, in contrast to a commercial relationship (Shore & Shore, 1995). Hence, training and development should be strategic, long-term, goal oriented, supportive of new ways of

learning, encouraging workplace innovation, and concentrated on guest service thinking and behaviour (Cannon & Gustafson, 2002; Costen *et al.*, 2010).

Additionally, POS is a mean to explain the link between organisation practices and employees commitment. Organisational commitment has been defined as the process by which the goals of the organisations and those of the individual become increasingly integrated and congruent (Bennett & Durkin, 2000; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982; Nikandrou *et al.*, 2008; Sowmya & Panchanatham, 2011). The concept of organisational commitment refers to the emotional strength of employees' identification with and immersion in a specific organisation and it is closely linked with employee commitment; affective organisational commitment or affective commitment (Cohen, 2007). The persistence component of organisational commitment is based on the costs and losses that employees calculate within the organisation. In addition, if there is a positive influence of affective commitment there is a significantly strong relationship between organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Yang, 2010) whereas a negative influence of affective commitment reflect on employees' plans to leave their employer (Bartlett, 2001; Karatepe & Uludag, 2007). Rhoades, Eisenberger, & Armeli (2001) highlighted facts that POS arbitrates the relationship among organisational rewards, procedural justice, supervisory support, and affective commitment. Furthermore, Allen *et al.* (2003) demonstrated that the relationship between best HR practices including growth opportunity, fairness of rewards and participation in decision-making and affective commitment were determined by POS. Regardless of all the other HR activities such as recruitment, selection, and reward systems, effective HR planning is probable through sustainable training. Hence, organisational training is one of the most significant components of organisational strategy (Tanova & Nadiri, 2005).

Moreover, organisations try to influence perceptions and interpretations of newcomers actively with the use of orientation, training, mentoring programmes, repetition of company slogans, mission and vision statements and employee handbooks and job descriptions (Kusluvan *et al.*, 2010; Louis, Posner, & Powell, 1983; Lunberg & Young, 1997) as a part of the socialization process (Kusluvan *et al.*, 2010). 'Newcomers' are identified as employees with less than 2-3 years of tenure in contrast with 'veterans' who are members with more than 2-3 years tenure (Lee & Allen, 1982; Morrison, 2002). Employers have the responsibility to provide training programmes to newcomers so to facilitate their adaptation to the new work environment and to develop newcomers' productivity (Lam *et al.*, 2002;

Rollag, 2004). Moreover, to familiarize employees with the organisational culture including values, beliefs and social norms (Kusluvan *et al.*, 2010) influencing positively employees' commitment (Louis *et al.*, 1983; Mowday *et al.*, 1982; Tannenbaum, Mathieu, & Cannon-Bowers, 1991) and impacting on turnover intentions (Costen *et al.*, 2010; Lam *et al.*, 2002; Saks, 1996). Furthermore, organisational benefits due to socialization can be seen in terms of superior employee performance, employee productivity, commitment, job satisfaction, role clarity, loyalty, and service quality (Kusluvan *et al.*, 2010). Lam *et al.*'s., (2002) study on new hotel employees argued that if employees do not understand how to perform tasks efficiently, frustration level will raise and that employees will most likely leave at the first opportunity. Furthermore, Conrade *et al.* (1994) revealed that 61 per cent of hotel companies' training expenditure is provided to new employees with the basic knowledge and skills needed for their jobs and that only around 39 per cent of training budget is spent on training existing employees (Conrade *et al.*, 1994) emphasizing the high investment on newcomers. Contrary, Nelson and Quick (1991) reported that the availability of formal orientation was not linked to newcomers' adjustment and the availability of offsite training was only linked to psychological distress symptoms. The authors concluded that helpfulness of relational attachments are of a greater importance than orientation and training sessions and suggested that few benefits are associated with influencing newcomers outcome behaviours due to the socialization process.

### **2.5.2. Management support towards training.**

From a management perspective, training programmes anticipate providing benefits to the organisation including employee development, increased productivity, and improved employee performance (Watson, 2008).

According to Chiang *et al.*'s., (2005) study, management predicted employees' expectations in regards to training and was aware of the training performance. Management understanding of employees' expectations in order to improve training quality enhanced positively employees' training satisfaction; job satisfaction; and turnover intentions. To eliminate the existing gap between expectations and perceptions of training quality, the study showed that management should increase awareness in regards to employees' wants and needs, should improve communication, and should identify suitable training delivery techniques and methods. Otherwise, gaps will exist between employees' expectations and actual training, not delivering the right training, not identifying training objectives, or not complementing

performance to promises (Chiang *et al.*, 2005). Employees' perceptions versus expectations of training quality were compared against fifteen items. Main differences were identified relating to "*hotel provides training at the time is been scheduled, management supports training, there is a clear communication between trainers and employees regarding training procedures, hotel provides sufficient training for employees to perform their jobs and hotel makes use of updated tools and resources*" (Chiang *et al.*, 2005, pp.113). Consequently, supporting lack of communication, unattained employees' needs, and lack of support from the organisation at a corporate level as main reasons of employees' dissatisfaction with the training received (Conrade *et al.*, 1994; Harris & Bonn, 2000). Therefore, managers should prioritize training and put more effort into it, so to enhance training quality (Chiang *et al.*, 2005).

Furthermore, employees' perception of motivation to training and access to training affect positively their organisational commitment (Bulut & Culha, 2010; Tharenou, 2001). Motivation is a driving force that stimuli interest towards a training programme and an incentive that guides employees to study and to master the training content. Alongside, the individual's motivation also affects the usage and application of newly obtained knowledge and skills despite disapproval and lack of management support (Noe *et al.*, 2010; Tharenou, 2001).

Access to training reflects on employees' perceptions of the likelihood of their presence at organisational training, no matter if superiors within the organisation base participation on unbiased and rational selective criteria, no matter if the application process is been overtly reinforced, and no matter if applicants have support by departmental managers (Bartlett & Kang, 2004). The possible access to training opportunities demonstrates a strong corporate culture and has been positively linked to organisation commitment (Bartlett & Kang, 2004; Boon & Arumugam, 2006). The importance of supervisors support is high to lower levels employees because they are the ones who decide employees' participation in training and development interventions. Furthermore, supervisors should encourage and should assist to develop employee skills, as well as support the transfer of training (Tharenou, 2001).

### **2.5.3. Transfer of training into the workplace.**

In order to boost job performance, the skills and behaviors taught and observed during training have to be transferred to the workplace (Bulut & Culha, 2010; Yaw, 2008), preserved

over time, and generalized across contexts (Holton & Baldwin, 2003). The final goal of training should be practical transfer to the workplace (Berry & Morris, 2005; Yaw, 2008). However, it is estimated that only 10 per cent of learning actually transfers to job performance (Holton & Baldwin, 2000; Kupritz, 2002), which challenges trainers and human resources professionals to prove the worth of their work (Burns, 1997), and the effectiveness of the programmes delivered (Becker *et al.*, 2001; Fitz-Enz & Davidson, 2002).

Yet, according to Yaw's (2008) study, the most significant barrier is the lack of reinforcement on-the-job to support trainees in the transfer of training to the workplace. Effective tools for transfer of training is based on communicating an expectation that learning will be transferred to the work environment, coaching learners by offering guidance and encouragement to transfer training to the work environment, offer and communicate support regarding the application of new acquired skills to the work environment.

So to maximize training effectiveness three levels are required to focus on, reactions of trainees; their interest in the programme, principles, facts and techniques; and application of the learned principles (Frash, Kline, Almanza, & Antun, 2008). Similarly, Sak's (2002) study showed that 51 per cent of respondents agreed that training investment has a positive impact in employees, and around of 47 per cent agreed that training results in a positive change in the organisation. Nonetheless, around 40 per cent of trainees are unsuccessful in the transfer of training straightaway; 70 per cent hesitate in transfer one year after the programme; and finally only 50 per cent of training investments cause organisational or individual developments.

The main three main factors influencing transfer of training into the workplace refer to "*learner characteristics, intervention design, and work environment*" (Burke & Hutchins, 2007, p.265). Transfer outcomes are dependent on self-efficacy which can be further developed when mastery practices and helpful feedback are been encompassed as a transfer intervention, when goal setting as well as self-management strategies are used in post training transfer intervention, and when trainees utilize self-guidance as a component of transfer intervention (Brown & Morissey, 2004; Switzer *et al.*, 2005). Furthermore, another influential factor is learner's training motivation (Chiaburu & Marinova, 2005) which is associated with the training reputation (Switzer *et al.*, 2005) and learner's personality (Herold, Davis, Fedor, & Parsons, 2002). Moreover, perceived utility or value linked with training is another influential factor. Managers who strongly consider positive in the utility of

training or the positive impact of training results are more probable to use competences acquired in training. Trainees' perceived value or utility of training can be affected by the trustworthiness of the new competencies for enhancing performance, an acknowledged requirement to increase job performance, an acceptance that utilizing new learning will develop performance and the applicability of the new competencies for facilitating transfer (Yelon et al., 2004). Training transfer is also affected by job and career factors such as career planning, career exploration, and job involvement and trainees who rated high on these factors inclined to recognize additional advantages from training to improve their actual or future job performance (Colquitt *et al.*, 2000; Kontoghiorghes, 2004; Pidd, 2004). Moreover, Pidd (2004) found that trainees who associated themselves with workplace groups such as fellow colleagues and managers reported higher training transfer in contrast with those who did not have a relationship or bonding with workplace groups or the organisation.

'*Intervention and design*' is another construct that impacts transfer of training (Burke & Hutchins, 2007). Training managers could provide more personalized methods of training that adapt to the trainee's learning style through different channels such as technological interventions that assist trainees who favor oral, visual or more hands-on methods. Furthermore, building connections between the expected training goals, the trainees' anticipations, and the actual job performance, aid to enable transfer of training (Frash *et al.*, 2010). Past studies found that transfer outcomes were higher for those trainees who were provided learning objectives by the facilitators prior to the training programme (Brown 2005; Kontoghiorghes, 2001). Content relevance also influences transfer, as training goals and materials should be subject rational or pertinent to the transfer task (Axtell, Maitlis, & Yearta, 1997; Bates, 2003) as well as instructional strategies and methods that are used to facilitate transfer (Russ-Eft, 2002). Instructional strategies and methods include practice and feedback to enhance long-term maintenance and application of training (Holladay & Quinones, 2003); overlearning especially for skills that may go underutilized for long periods (Cole, 2008); active learning where the involvement of trainees during the training programme is dependent on constructed activities and it maintains the adult attention span (Silberman & Auerbach, 2006); error-based examples where facilitators reveal to trainees what can go wrong if they do not apply the trained skills in their workplace and where trainees learn from others' mistakes (Ivancik & Hesketh, 2000); and self-generated positive feedback by assigning precise and demanding goals, utilizing action plans, and participating in self-regulatory behavior of trainees (Brown, 2005; Richman-Hirsch, 2001).

Lastly, *a work environment influence* is another construct linked to training transfer (Burke & Hutchins, 2007). Learning and training interventions must be aligned with the organisational goals and strategies (Lim & Johnson, 2002; Montesimo, 2002), as well as positive climate transfer. Positive climate transfer encouraging trainees to use new skills and competencies, aftermaths for right practice of skills, rectification for not using skills, and providing social support from fellow colleagues (Hawley & Barnard, 2005), and management through rewards and advice (Lim & Johnson, 2002; Machin & Fogarty, 2004; Richman-Hirsch, 2001). The training initiative must incorporate feedback opportunities mainly on-the-job and supervisors must allocate time during work-shifts to ensure that training content is been reviewed and training objectives are been reinforced (Frash *et al.*, 2010). The opportunity to perform is another factor influencing positive transfer of training, being rated as the highest form of support for trainees and the opposite was rated as the biggest barrier to transfer (Lim & Johnson, 2002) by adjusting employees' usual workload to allow them, apply new skills and knowledge on the job to boost transfer (Clarke, 2002). Lastly, accountability refers to the extent to which the organisation, culture, and/or management demand trainees to apply acquired knowledge and skills on their work and considers them liable for performing (Kontoghiorges, 2002; Russ-Eft, 2002) emphasizing that performance expectations should be well-defined, achievable, and compensated when accomplished (Frash *et al.*, 2010).

Nevertheless, failure to transfer could occur with training in problem solving, management development, and interpersonal skills, where trainers admit that they have no verification about the training impact on the way employees perform their jobs (Frash *et al.*, 2010). Moverover, training impact is subjective by the organisational culture and structure, by the job design, by the incentives used to motivate employees, by the power and politics that are existent in the organisation, by the group practices (Sahinidis & Bouris, 2008) and by the management style (Wright & Geroy, 2001).

#### **2.5.4. Training environment.**

Training strategies utilized to enhance the training environment consist of written job descriptions, employing facilitators with adequate skills, using training manuals and audio-visual equipment as supportive tools, adequate training facilities, blending hands-on training besides to the traditional classroom training, and making available employee feedback through training evaluations (Chiang *et al.*, 2005).



Establishing an environment contributing to learning is critical and the facilities play a crucial role including room arrangements, size of the room, training requirements, training venue accessibility, location, convenience, distractions, obstructions, seating, furniture, lighting, workable walls, climate control, and audio-visual equipment (Biech, 2005; Reid & Barrington, 1999; Siddons, 2003).

Another important factor of training design is the length of training in regards to how much training time is required in order to achieve training objectives (Thacker & Blanchard, 2006). In case the training is not extensive enough to allow learning and transfer of new skills, then the identified needs during the training needs analysis are not solved, in turn training goals are not be accomplished, and training investment is wasted (Brown, 2002; Cole, 2008). In line with the CIPD (2011) annual report in learning and talent development, 72 per cent of organisations report they keep track of the number of training and development days an employee receives within a year. The median number of training days employees receive over 12 months is five representing an increase of one day from previous year. Smaller organisations with less than 50 employees tend to have more training days per employee on average accounting to seven and a half days but only minor differences between medium and large organisations. According to Vujic *et al.*, (2008), the necessary time for improvement of knowledge and advancement of employees depends on the position and it is displayed in table 2.20.

**Table 2.4: Time necessary for improvement of knowledge and advancement by position level.**

Level of position	Days	% of total working time
Executives	15-20	6-8
Operative managers	10-15	4-6
Employees	5-10	2-4

Source: Vujic *et al.*, 2008, p.208.

The organisation's decision to devote time for learning plays a significant part in creating psychological and behavioural settings for training effectiveness (Lipshitz, Popper, & Friedman, 2002). In the context of training, training directed at behavioural change must offer enough time to absorb new behaviours and to guarantee transfer of these new behaviours to

the workplace (Campbell & Kuncel, 2001). According to a meta-analysis of behavior modelling, training established that skill development was highest when training time was lengthiest (Taylor, Russ-Eft & Chan, 2005), and skill development increases with training time, since there is a chance to guarantee adaptability in practice situations to produce 'self-efficacy' (Holladay & Quinones, 2003). Despite the numerous evidences that support that sufficient training time must be provided in order to achieve training objectives, organisations provide very limited training (Cole, 2008). On the contrary, overtraining can result in frustration and damage the credibility of management and reputation of training programme (Blair & Seo, 2007).

Financing training is another component, which forms part of the training environment, and in the hospitality industry, there are three situations to get funding for training and the starting point is to identify the benefit-to-cost ratio of structured training. Clements and Josiam (1995) stated that there is a need to evaluate the costs and benefits of the training programme by convincing the owner or corporate management of the need for a specific training programme and making it mandatory for all employees. On the other hand, managers at a unit level cannot recognize the potential benefits but rather perceive training as a luxury option, which is time consuming, and decreases profit margins, hence training lacks management support and it is ineffective. Another scenario could happen when the corporate office recommends a training programme and only some units take advantage of it, leading to inconsistency of training amongst the company. Lastly, an external party such as a vendor approaches the corporate office or the unit selling a training programme and without any analysis of the potential outcomes and benefits, the final purchasing decision lies on personal feelings rather than subjective measurements (Clements & Josiam, 1995). Lashley (2009) also supported that many jobs in the hospitality sector are designed to be undertaken by unskilled workers where low obstacles to entry, minimal wages, minimum training, and high levels of turnover coincide with this low-road approach. Gaining employer acumens into the hospitality sector are regularly inconsistent since the major participants to the discussion are frequently representatives of organisations who highly value and rank first training. Frequently, they support State funding of training, otherwise they insist on part of the cost to be settled by the trainees, since these ways decrease employers training expenses, while simultaneously supplying a skilled labour force (Gleeson & Keep, 2004).

As per Conrade *et al's.*, (1994) study only 51 per cent of the corporate-level participants pointed out that their organisations had any type of training represented in their corporate

budgets, including conferences and off-site seminars. At a property level 43 per cent of respondents reported that their companies had policies that highlighted training programmes at the property-level. It is evident that lack of emphasis may be a direct result of the method by which training costs are justified within the organisations. In the study, only half of the companies included training as a line-item expense. Furthermore, 26 per cent of the respondents at corporate level and property stated that on-the-job training was regarded as a line item. Hence, in approximately three-quarters of those hospitality companies, either on-the-job training is perceived as an expense or it is excluded from the training budgets. In most cases, on-the-job training is charged as a labour expense to the various departments that is conducted increasing company's labour costs. Another implication is the fact that labours expenses is an item on which managers were frequently assessed and by including it on their budgets, managers were able to plan better their training expenses (Conrade *et al.*, 1994).

A large sum of money is spent yearly by organisations on employees training and development. Organisations in the US set 3 per cent of their expenditure aside for training whereas in the UK is less than 1 per cent (Mullen, 2004). According to the HR Magazine (2008), US organisations invested around \$129.6 billion dollars in 2006, which represents an average of \$1,850 per annum, per employee, on training (Ruiz, 2006; Saranow, 2006). It demonstrates the large investment of resources towards employees, which shows that an organisation with 100 employees spends approximately \$185,000 per annum for training, whereas an organisation with 1,000 employees spends around \$1.85 million dollars per annum (Kalargyrou & Woods, 2009). However, the retail and hospitality industries are distinguished as low purchasers of external training predominantly that offered by public training providers (Dougherty, 2003) due to size since most of the organisations are classified as small medium size enterprises (SMEs) or due to the heavily dependence on on-the-job training (Jameson, 2000).

The trainer's role also forms part of the training environment and therefore his/her role in the business is to provide the direction and support any learner needs. In order to do so the trainers should have a sound understanding of technology, as well as business and financial skills, so that it becomes easier to bring into line learning with work (Davenport, 2007). Based on the study of Conrade *et al.*, (1994), frequently the effectiveness of on-the-job training is influenced by who conducts the training. In their study, 38 per cent of the time employees received on-the-job training from a supervisor or a manager; 35 per cent of employees were trained by another employee; and 27 per cent by a group of other employees.

The findings showed that most successfully was when a supervisor or a manager trained employees since they apt to deliver the type of service aimed by the organisation.

In addition, trainers should demonstrate certain competencies such as efficient active listening, verbal and non-verbal communication skills (Leigh, 2006; Pont, 1996). Likewise, flexibility, enthusiasm, passion, and pride which are essential for the effective design, delivery of training, and have a positive impact on the reaction of trainees (Lalaguna, 2007; Leigh, 2006), the development of the workforce, and the career opportunities for employees' advancement, which result in a decrease on turnover and personnel costs (Kalargyrou & Woods, 2009). Moreover, Rae (2002) and Kalargyrou and Woods (2009) highlighted that trainers should obtain competencies like organisational knowledge, knowledge of management roles and functions regarding responsibilities and authority, training knowledge, programme preparation skills, IT skills, people skills, commitment towards training and towards the development of people, creativity to increase effectiveness. Likewise, trainers should utilize numerous methods of communicating information, self-development, humour, and confidence (Kalargyrou & Woods, 2009).

#### **2.5.5. Training techniques.**

Generally, training methods typologies are categorized according to location either on-the-job or off the job, and level of formality either formal or informal (Lee-Ross & Pryce, 2010). Formal training is an off-the-job setting such as an educational institution whereas informal training is unforeseen, not documented, and largely formless (Tanova & Nadiri, 2005). It is proven that hospitality organisations tend to provide internal training to lower levels employees and avail external training for supervisory and managerial level employees (Davies *et al.*, 2001). Furthermore, Abeysekera's study (2006) based on a privately owned public hotel chain in Australia showed that the groups of hotels were lacking the provision of off-the-job training. It was because of long working hours, not allowing employees to participate in off-the-job training since a large number of employees were casual staff, and lack of management support towards training lack interest in providing training opportunities for casual employees, due to high turnover rates resulting in providing only on-the-job training in an ad hoc manner. The main drive of the group to motivate employees to participate in training was based solely on the creation of additional revenues for the company.

A number of different training techniques can assist employees acquire new knowledge, skills and abilities. Training techniques consist of presentation methods, hands-on methods, and group or team-building methods (Noe *et al.*, 2012). However, the training techniques selected reflect upon the different types of training such as induction training, job-specific operational procedures training, technology training, mandatory training, improvement training, and attitudinal training (Baunfield, & Kay, 2008; Rodríguez & Gregory, 2005). A study conducted by Harris and Bonn (2000) in relation to the training techniques used by foodservice organisations revealed that 99.3 per cent of organisations use texts and manuals; 89.9 per cent used transparencies and flip charts; 20.8 per cent used computers; 14.1 per cent used audio-video tapes; 0.7 per cent used teleconferencing and none used interactive multimedia. In terms of frequency, amongst the training techniques including lecture-pupil (classroom style); textbooks and manuals; case study; simulations and on-the-job training, the findings showed that 40.3 per cent of organisations always used on-the-job training as opposed to case studies which 37.6 per cent of organisations never used them.

#### **2.5.6. On-the-job training.**

On-the-job training (OJT) refers to “*new or inexperienced employees learning through observing peers or managers performing the job and trying to imitate their behavior*” (Noe *et al.*, 2012, p.295) and it involves two processes; acquisition and performance (Lee-Ross & Pryce, 2010). To learn a new set of skills or a new concept, it is best understood if it connects to an action, an event, or an experience the learner can associate to (Teare, 2011). Other forms of on-the-job training include job rotation, secondments and mentoring leading to multi-skilling or functional flexibility (Lee-Ross & Pryce, 2010; Santos & Stuart, 2003). This training method can be beneficial for training newly joint employees to the organisation, upgrading existing employees’ skills when new technology is launched, cross-training employees, and orienting employees who have been either promoted or transferred to new job roles (Noe *et al.*, 2012), allowing employees to shadow the mentor, observe, learn and practice (Lee-Ross & Pryce, 2010).

In Conrade *et al.*’s., (1994) study, 68 per cent respondents identified that the type of training preferred by managers of hospitality companies was on-the-job training. Approximately 27 per cent of training expenditures are invested on formal training such as lectures, seminars, videos, role-plays and simulations. Conversely, employees subjected to on-the-job training may not be receiving quality training. For example, 50 per cent of the time on-the-job

training consists of replacing an employee with a trainee in the normal schedule instead of adding a trainee to the existing staff, thus jeopardising not only organisational service standards but also the trainee's learning curve.

In contrast, Paradise (2008) believed that knowledge obtained through informal learning and channels is comparable to that obtained through traditional formal methods. In the online survey conducted by the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) and the Institute for Corporate Productivity (i4cp) which took place between March and April 2008 with 1,104 human resources and learning professionals findings from the survey demonstrated that there are issues in handling informal learning within organisations. Informal learning for the purpose of the study was defined as: *"a learning activity that is not easily recognizable as formal training and performance support"* (Paradise, 2008, p.1). The respondents agreed that informal learning is common in their organisations and 34 per cent of respondents reported that it is occurring to a high or seven per cent very high extent in their organisations, and only two per cent reported that their workforce had no informal learning at all. Various informal learning tools were mentioned with email emerging as the top ranked informal learning tool, followed by the company's' intranet. In addition, the collection of "fingertip" knowledge such as Google searches having high or very-high use. Furthermore, knowledge transfer through employee frequent lunches to exchange ideas and experiences, rearranging the office layout to facilitate conversations, employee-driven podcasting, placement of television in common areas, and reliance on internal wikis were amongst the methods used. The 'buddy system' was identified as the best source of knowledge for new hires on-board. Therefore, many organisations are facilitating informal platforms, channels, and use of technology for learning since it is viewed as a learning complement (Paradise, 2008).

For instance, the Coastal Hotel Group uses a 'buddy system' for training employees, where existing hotel properties allocate employee trainers to new hotel developments so to train employees during the pre-opening phase with the required knowledge and skills (Enz & Siguaw, 2000). However, on-the-job training is perceived as an effective method only when trained facilitators are conducting it rather than using the buddy system method, which is perceived as a *"cheap substitute"* (Poulston, 2008, p.421). Another approach is implemented by Four Seasons where certain employees are identified to become departmental trainers and are trained by the human resources department to adhere to a structured training and coaching

programme by conducting customized trainings with colleagues from the same departments (Enz & Siguaw, 2000).

Nevertheless, the unstructured approach of OJT can also encompass several disadvantages such as inexperienced employees or even supervisors with poor training skills training other employees resulting in the provision of inappropriate or inadequate training. Moreover, indifference for or absence of standard job performance criteria; unsuitable training environment; poor framework of the learning such that the trainee is '*thrown in the deep end*' and transmission of defective habits (Lee-Ross & Pryce, 2010). Executing a task openly with inadequate skills can have detrimental results. For instance, it can put at risk the service quality provided, provoking complications, and affecting employees feelings such as bringing unhappiness, frustration, embarrassment and humiliation, unwanted and destructive behavior implying that training is poor, and even punishment of employees due to their poor performance (Poulston, 2008), in contrast to the fact that training improves self-esteem (Poulston, 2008; Wesley & Skip, 1999).

#### **2.5.7. Off-the-job training.**

Off-the-job training takes place outside the usual work environment and tends to be external in nature to the organisation. It can be delivered through in-house trainers but generally, it is associated with the use of external trainers or specialist trainers. Some examples of off-the-job training include formal induction sessions, training gearing towards the acquisition, proficiency, and mastering of a specific skill set. Off-the-job training techniques mainly used are conference or discussion method, lectures, E learning and adventure training and interactive methods such as use of role-plays, case studies, and simulations. In the hospitality and tourism industry, off-the-job training is primarily used for developing customer service skills (Lee-Ross & Pryce, 2010).

One of the main means of promoting positive employee interactions is through formal training programmes and up to half of an organisation's training budget is used up on developing interpersonal skills. These types of programmes concentrate on a range of skills, such as coaching and counselling, conflict resolution, interviewing, performance management, and customer service. Nevertheless, despite the high investments in terms of money, resources, and time, these training programmes do not always reach the anticipated results (Training Magazine, 2004).

Tews's and Tracey's (2009) study suggested that formal classroom training in interpersonal skills can be reinforced and supported by self-coaching or upward feedback. It was recommended that delivering the training programme over a longer period decrease the weekly load of finishing the workbook materials. In addition, that extra time allows trainees to put in practice their interpersonal skills at the workplace and hence increases the significance of the activities. In regards to upward feedback process, a longer period permits trainees to be observed on-the-job before having their performance officially assessed with written feedback reports. Organisational support, commitment, and dedication were also crucial factors in ensuring that training is successful as well as the involvement of the company's vice president of human resources. With the use of conference calls with general managers and regional directors, the training interventions were explained in details, so managers support the trainees and ensure compliance. Administrative support was also provided so to oversee trainees' compliance and follow through with them via e-mail and telephone in the event that materials were not presented within the deadlines (Tews & Tracey, 2009).

The most common form of external training comprises of vocational training (Baum, 2006). Vocational training is defined as "*training that emphasizes skills and knowledge required for a particular job function or a trade*" (businessdictionary.nd). The enhancement of skills to meet the requirements of various shareholders in hospitality is often seen as collaboration between the industry and the educational or training providers. The amount of their individual participation relies on the objectives and level of training along with the system in which training is placed (Baum, 2002; Zagonari, 2009). For instance, within the German apprenticeship system, apprentices devote the greater part of their training time in the workplace with a short, usually 8-week discharge period to college within any one year known as a trade specific training for apprenticeship. By contrast, NVQ and SVQ training in the United Kingdom can be principally within the so-called 'real work environment' (RWE) of the college with partial formal and assessed exposure to the industry during the programme (Baum, 2002). Velde and Cooper (2000) confirmed that effective vocational training enhances the competitive edge of an organisation and parallel increases the self-esteem of employees. Nonetheless, the main area of concern for vocational training is to maintain equilibrium between employees' development, the need of promoting knowledge and learning, and the requirement to deliver what is expected by the industry (Riley *et al.*, 2002). Vocational colleges are expected to teach well-identified transferrable skills to students, who



will be able to apply those skills upon completion of the programme in their workplace, whereas university students are more likely to learn how to cope with skill changes, technological advancements, obtaining general knowledge (Zagonari, 2009). In the majority of educational establishments offering vocational programmes, the programmes relate to languages, social studies, maths, and trade specific knowledge providing a certification upon successful completion of the programme (Kammermann, 2010; Thomas & Grimes, 2003).

Formal education through several university establishments as well as organisations has emerged to promote tourism and hospitality disciplines. These affiliations show the potential of high quality education and potential rewarding careers in the field of hospitality and tourism worldwide providing qualifications ranging from certificates, diplomas, and degrees to masters and even higher doctoral qualifications (Lee-Ross & Pryce, 2010). In addition, Baum (2006) argued that the positioning of training, development, and education are key elements of the industry's framework for the future and crucial for the evolution and sustainability of the industry's competitiveness in an international context. He highlights further that through training, development and education, college students, and employees within the hospitality and tourism industry have the prospects for international vocational mobility either in support of individual ambitions or of company requests since *"training for skills and education is for life"* (Baum, 2006, p.206).

#### **2.5.8. E-learning.**

Due to globalization, many companies are trying to increase their market share and according to Singh, Kim, and Feinstein (2011) the Internet is an effective medium of training with the majority of industries embracing in E-learning or Internet-based learning. E-learning is defined as the formation and supply of organisational knowledge through the online delivery of information, communication, education and training (Collins, Buhalis, & Peters, 2003; Wild, Griggs, & Downing, 2002). However, E-learning is not based only in the use of Web-based technologies or distance learning, but it is a way used to exchange information within an organisation ranging from online programmes, CD-ROMs, DVDs to videoconferencing (Sigala, 2002). Furthermore, it offers an effective delivery mode because of its flexibility, providing access to learning materials, tutors and other learners at any location and at any time (Shepherd, 2004).

The utilization of Internet as a training medium has several advantages. Acknowledging advantages such as that the Internet offers the learner the capability to suitably fit training

into his or her schedule, it is low cost, easy access, and ease of keeping material up to date. Furthermore, instigating productivity enhancement and quality improvement (Macpherson, Homan, & Wilkinson, 2005; Murphy, 2001; Rosenberg, 2000) and eliminating the need to put together print manuals (Collins *et al.*, 2003). Some of the main features of effective E-learning include “*well designed; learner centered; interactive; affordable; efficient and accessible*” (Sarmiento, 2010, p.399). Technology is used by employees to access material via their mobile handsets, laptops or even MP3 players known as mobile learning (m-learning) (Davenport, 2007). E-learning is valuable to the hotel industry since organisations offer training either on the job and/or via on line to retain and educate employees at all levels (Collins *et al.*, 2003). Similarly, Sarmiento’s (2010) study showed that the use of E-learning in hotels in Portugal is a vital component in an attempt to increase production volume, productivity levels, and performance quality levels with less positive impact on absenteeism and turnover levels.

Effective use of E-learning is reflected on a number of hospitality cases such as Hilton Corporation (Baldwin-Evans, 2006) and Whitbread (Pollitt, 2008). Hilton Corporation, has developed a learning culture for Hilton Hotels by emboldening and proposing a uniform approach to training for all level employees using E-learning technology, resulting in Hilton’s online learning portal been launched in 2002, offered by Hilton University with over 100,000 online programmes completed (Baldwin-Evans, 2006). Main strengths of the E-learning platform refer to the university’s virtual classroom environment, cost effectiveness, discussion forums, increased on generic skills, as well as communication and customer service skills (Baldwin-Evans, 2006). In addition, E-learning programmes offered by Whitbread, a UK hospitality company cover areas such as health and safety; F&B; accounting and housekeeping modules translated in nine different languages due to its workforce ethnic diversity. Besides, the company has introduced a peer-to-peer training system where a group of people act as trainers and they are called champions having the responsibility of mentoring, coaching, and establishing mutual learning. As a result, since the implementation of the system in 2004 until 2008 more than 98,000 E-learning programmes have been completed, which corresponds to 4,587 days or 12.6 years of learning (Pollitt, 2008).

Nevertheless, some of the main disadvantages or areas of concern related to E-learning reflect to the financial investment towards the set up and upkeep of the system; the needed setup so all employees can log in to the system; high-speed internet access; additional training for

employees who are not technologically advanced; establishing a proper evaluation system; inspiring employees to morally complete their designated programmes, preferences of employees for face-to-face contact with trainers and other trainees, and having constant interactions between learners and facilitators on-line (Collins *et al.*, 2003). In contrast, E-learning is not always considered being a viable training platform for all skills or a replacement for traditional training since there is lack of interaction with facilitators or other participants within an E-learning environment (Cheng & Picolli, 2002; Van Hoof & Combrink, 1998). For instance, methods such as on-the-job and face-to-face training are crucial, particularly in teaching 'soft skills' like management or technical skills (Cheng & Picolli, 2002) however, Kim, Erdem, Byun, and Jeong (2011) support the notion of training soft skills via E-learning. According to Coleman (Global Learning Manager at Unilever) E-learning is most applicable for mandatory-driven learning such as health and safety training (Green, 2005) and in the hotel sector is primarily used in areas such as food safety and alcoholic beverage sales (Hanrahan, 2007).

#### **2.5.9. Effectiveness of training practices.**

The annual report in learning and talent development conducted by the CIPD in 2011, based on 594 respondents showed that the three most effective practices are in-house development programmes, followed by coaching by line managers, and on-the-job training accounting for 54 per cent, 53 per cent and 33 per cent respectively. On contrary, the least effective practices are external workshops and events, followed by E-learning and audio tapes, visual and learning resources accounting for 10 per cent, 10 per cent, and 2 per cent respectively (CIPD, 2011).

Furunes (2005) study presented how Norwegian hospitality managers perceive effectiveness of alternative employee training methods with the purpose of accomplishing the training aims revealing that one-to-one (on-the-job) training is distinguished as the best training method for attainment of knowledge, transforming attitudes, problem solving, interpersonal skill development, participant acceptance, and knowledge preservation. Nevertheless, the contradiction is that lectures, as a training method is the second most used training method, but score at a low level as a best method. Therefore, if the organisation does its utmost towards converting into a learning organisation, it is important to pick up new routines. Subsequently, on-the-job training should not be the only method used since it points towards

at misusing one's own routines as a substitute of developing them (Furunes, 2005; Jameson, 2000).

## **2.6. BENEFITS OF TRAINING TO FRONT-LINE EMPLOYEES.**

Employee training expands the competencies of employees and reinforces their competitive advantage by increasing employees' personal qualities and professional skills. In addition, management as well as organisations would advantage from employee training, and guests would benefit because of the received quality products and services (Chartrungruang, Turner, King, & Waryszak, 2006; Sommerville, 2007). From an employee perspective, individuals could benefit in regards to their occupations, careers, and achievement of individual's development objectives. Therefore, employees' expectations from organisational training can be job-related, career-related, or even personal (Washington *et al.*, 2003).

### **2.6.1. Service delivery.**

Hemdi and Nasuridin (2006) concluded that employees' with higher perceptions on the accessibility and efficacy of formal training programmes, as well as clear instructions on training programmes given by the hotel administrators, experience a higher sense of trust in their organisations. Moreover, they suggested that organizations pass on the message that employees are appreciated, supported, and cared by them (Costen *et al.*, 2010; Hemdi & Nasuridin, 2006). Consequently, hotel organisations providing training programmes on an on-going basis to their operational employees would instigate employee's self-development and self-confidence, highlighting the importance of their job roles and functions to the organisation, and based on the obtainable learning acquired through the training intervention, employee's confidence increases resulting in higher customer service delivery (Somerville, 2007). Furthermore, enhancing multi-tasking is a priority for companies such as McDonald's Restaurants that train employees to work in all tasks in the production of goods and services of customer (Lashley, 2009), as well as companies such as Hilton, Marriott, and Jury's Inn who believe in multiskilling (Nickson *et al.*, 2003).

Training provision is not only related to the skill needs based on the establishment types such as bars, restaurants and hotels but it is closely related to the service levels. Systematising training provision around service types results in more transferability into the work environment because skill sets at different levels of service can be transferred between numerous departments and units. Hence, focus should be placed on the nature of job design

and the necessity for skills sets amongst front-line employees delivering different types of service to guests (Lashley, 2009).

In the case of Hand Picked Hotels, which has a collection of 17 country-house hotels across the UK, formed in 2001, focusing on high quality service and cuisine, training had a positive relationship with the decrease of staff turnover and increase on customer satisfaction. The overall aim of the company was to enhance the brand and deliver a series of experiential training modules developed around important behavior for all employees. In January 2009, the company launched a campaign called Being Hand Picked. The company had employee retention of 47 per cent; no employee-opinion survey for three years, guest complaints reached at 0.006 per cent of rooms sold with a ratio of complaints to compliments of 1:2, and the average mystery-guest survey satisfaction score was 72 per cent. The key objectives were to develop engagement and loyalty of not only employees but customers too, to improve retention to 55 per cent, to reduce complaints to 0.004 per cent of rooms sold, and to improve the ratio of complaints to compliments to 1:5. The learning objectives of the workshops were to identify the most important elements of the guest experience; to demonstrate how employees contribute to the realization of a unique guest experience; and to ensure that behaviors like being attentive, natural, charming and creative were present amongst staff. Over 80 per cent of the company's 900 hotel and 32 support-center employees attended the training programme. As a result of training, Hand Picked Hotels has seen complaints falling down by 40 per cent, at a saving of 53,000 per annum, with guest complaints fallen to 0.002 per cent rooms sold, and ratio of complaints to compliments of 1:5. Satisfaction scores based on the mystery-guest also improved from 72 per cent to 77 per cent, increased loyalty-club membership as well as repeat customers, employee turnover during the first half year was down by 10.79 per cent, and employee retention was up to 61 per cent per annum. Despite the slowdown of the economic period the company implemented and invested in the programme and employees in turn appreciated the opportunity of been trained and realized their value to the company (Pollitt, 2011). Therefore, training intervention with a hands-on approach, structured, and guidance assists employees to learn new ways of solving problems, to deliver high service, as well as to handle complaints effectively (Somerville, 2007).

#### **2.6.2. Attitude.**

Pool and Pool (2007) stated that job satisfaction is a work attitude, which mirrors the degree an individual enjoys his or her job. Job satisfaction is not a cohesive concept, since an individual can be satisfied with one aspect of the job and dissatisfied with other aspects of it.

As soon as employees earn trust, and foster a culture of commitment, intentions to stay within an organization and job satisfaction are greater than before (Pool & Pool, 2007). However, if employees feel less than competent to perform a task, are more likely to leave the field (Aggarwal & Bhargava, 2011; Chen, Chang, & Yeh, 2004), or if they decide to remain within the organisation then their productivity levels would be below standards (Kanelopoulos & Akrivos, 2006). It is evident that the larger the gap between the needed skills and those held by employees, the greater the lack of employees' job satisfaction and turnover intentions (Sahinidis & Bouris, 2008). Furthermore, provision of training and skill development assists employees in operating autonomously and responsibly (Guest, 2002). Similarly, Garlick's study (2010) based on a poll conducted by Maritz of 1,000 full-time employees represented by 37 per cent food service or restaurant employees, 24 per cent hotel employees, 17 per cent recreational employees, 12 per cent airline or airport handling employees, six per cent gaming industry employees and four per cent in other sectors of the hospitality sector. The author concluded that employees with greater satisfaction enjoy more customer interactions in comparison to employees with less satisfaction who displayed negative feelings towards customers such as indifference, annoyance, and work disengagement. An influential factor on employees' satisfaction is the individual sense of achievement from work along with the use of professional talent on meaningful work. Furthermore, work related feedback and opportunities to learn and develop in job functions improve employee's attitude affecting positively customer experiences. Ultimately, employees strongly agreed that excellent customer service was offered due to team goals achievement, management support by ensuring that all employees are equal, effective training offered to assist excellent customer service delivery, policies and procedures which support customers satisfaction, and decisions by higher management mirroring their commitment to customers (Garlick, 2010).

### **2.6.3. Motivation.**

Work motivation is based on an analysis of individual's values and needs, focusing on growth as being one of the most valuable motivators instigating higher efforts by employees, which is further explained within the principles of scientific management by theorists like Maslow (1943), McGregor (1960), Vroom (1964), Herzberg (1966), Alderfer (1972), McClelland (1987) and Taylor (1991). Since individuals participating in training have different expectations and desires, it is essential that managers determine which extrinsic factors (e.g. monetary rewards) and intrinsic factors (e.g. autonomy) motivate each employee. Motivated trainees participate actively in training and gain more from the involvement than

individuals who are not motivated. Highly motivated employees are expected to acquire and use their obtained knowledge and skills upon the completion of training in their jobs (Chiaburu & Tekleab, 2005). In order to identify which factors are more valuable to employees, managers should observe and interact with their employees and furthermore motivate employees by associating employee needs to training outcomes (Tews & Tracey, 2009). Sirota *et al.* (2005) study proposed that motivation relates directly to the need for achievement, which is fulfilled through career growth, resulting from training and learning. Based on the three-factor theory of human motivation in the workplace the primary sets of goals of individuals at work refer to equity, achievement, and camaraderie. As soon as these three main motivational factors are satisfied, an employee's enthusiasm to achieve organisational goals increase. Therefore, training practices used by organisations affect directly or indirectly employees' motivation as well as organisational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991). A more recent study conducted by Pool and Pool (2007) stated a similar correlation between motivation, commitment, and job satisfaction within a learning oriented organisation. Furthermore, many researches indicated that there is a significant correlation between the employee perceived training effectiveness and employees' motivation, commitment, and job satisfaction (Basset-Jones & Lloyd, 2005; Sahinidis & Bouris, 2008).

#### **2.6.4. Abilities.**

Ability refers to an individual's capacity to perform a number of tasks in a specific job and is dependent on two factors: intellectual and physical abilities (Robbins & Judge, 2009). Intellectual abilities are abilities, which are necessary so to carry out mental activities such as thinking, reasoning, and problem solving (Robbins & Judge, 2009). There are facts that prove that training can be of substantial value in improving the decision-making abilities of hospitality and tourism employees (Brownell, 2003; Sims, 2004). Training interventions allow employees to become productive faster hence, employees get familiar with work responsibilities, build up knowledge and techniques, which improve abilities, generating increased productivity (Somerville, 2007). It is been argued that intellectual abilities are turning out to be more and more significant for many jobs, and that physical abilities have been and will continue to be important for effectively doing specific jobs (Robbins & Judge, 2009).

Furthermore, the changing environment that hotels face, drive them to look for ways of improving quality and reputation, efficiency, and increasing market shares. One way to

improve competitive advantage is through innovation or the ability to produce and launch new products and services. The development of innovations forms part of the strategic drivers to achieve competitiveness and enhance productivity (Yeung, 2006). Intellectual agility is *“the ability to apply knowledge across contexts and situations, and to innovate and transform ideas that are critical to the success of the programme”* (Huang, Miyoshi, La Torre, Marshall, Perez, & Peterson, 2007, p.3) and it depends on the skill of synthesizing information and placing it together in an original way. Its features take into account innovation, imitation, and adaptation (Huang *et al.*, 2007).

In the hotel sector, innovation consists of technological incorporations into key areas, departments, and services such as control processes, computer equipment, information and telecommunications technologies, kitchens, Food and Beverage service, rooms, maintenance and savings in utilities, security, cleaning, and laundry. Incorporating technologies developed either in-house or purchased from external vendors in these functional areas aim to result into a competitive advantage, either by increasing productivity and hence reducing costs or by giving the capacity to be different resulting in improved service by adapting it to consumer demand (Hjalager, 2002). However, innovation is not only the technological advancements but also the perceived function of a hotel's in-house resources, which consist of employees training as well as managerial characteristics (Lopez-Cabrales, Valle, & Herrero, 2006).

Additionally, Wong and Pang (2003) also found that training and development programmes are the most important factors in enhancing staff creativity. Therefore, the relationship between innovation and upgrading of human resources is significant because decisions related to innovation and company performance may hinge on human resource skills (Saks & Belcourt, 2006). Since the hotel industry is labour intensive, the way in which employees are qualified and trained enhance new knowledge, ideas, and creativity to the hotels and hence, increase the probability to introduce innovations, which is dependent on training plans, training frequency, and training intensity (Martínes-Ros & Orfila-Sintes, 2012; Yeung, 2006).

#### **2.6.5. Job Satisfaction.**

Training is a tool used to increase job satisfaction (Chiang *et al.*, 2005; Rowden, 2002; Rowden & Conine, 2005). Becker (1964) argued that companies invest in specific training only, whilst employees invest in general skills. Increased training provision promotes a high degree of job satisfaction, which results into a higher retention rate. In addition, lower



turnover correlates to high guest returns and investor interest (Cannon & Gustafson, 2002). Employees' job satisfaction can be increased by ensuring that promotion opportunities are offered as well as specific training (Gallardo, Sánchez-Cañizares, López-Guzmán, & Jesus, 2010). During the training, employees are introduced to the job role and functions, standard operating procedures on how to perform, the value of the job role to the organisation, resulting in increased employees' job satisfaction and recognition (Au, Altman, & Roussel, 2008; Rowden & Conine, 2005). Chiang *et al.* (2005) study supported that training quality is positively related to training satisfaction, job satisfaction, and intention to stay within the industry. Moreover, Tsai *et al.* (2007) found that employees who are devoted to learning proved a higher level of job satisfaction with a positive impact on job performance.

In the case of employee job dissatisfaction, several studies have tested the impact of HRM practices on reducing employee turnover (Carbery, Garavan, O'Brien, & McDonnell, 2003; Robinson & Barron, 2007; Tutuncu & Kozak, 2007). Carbery *et al.* (2003) suggested that the psychological contract, career expectations, as well as managerial competencies influence employees' decisions on leaving an organisation. Similarly, Tutuncu and Kozak (2007) suggested that the type of work, the remuneration, and supervision within the hospitality industry could lead to job dissatisfaction followed by employee turnover. Lam *et al.* (2002) also found that the role of training and mentoring are crucial factors on employees' decisions to leave an organisation, mainly referring to newly joint employees where training significantly moderates their intentions to leave an organisation. In addition, personal employee dimensions are predictors of turnover intentions positively related with negative affectivity, workload, exhaustion, and cynicism (Lee & Shin, 2005). Karatepe and Uludag (2007) emphasized that front line employees who find challenging spending time with their families or keeping social commitments are emotionally exhausted increasing job dissatisfaction. Hence, lack of work life balance (WLB) and personal employee dimensions are affected negatively.

#### **2.6.6. Opportunity for career growth.**

Employee development is defined as “*the process of providing employees with opportunities to grow within an organisation*” (Costen *et al.*, 2010, p.131). Training opportunities assist employees' career development and by receiving more training opportunities and by communicating to employees open positions (Costen *et al.*, 2010; Somerville, 2007), the prospects for career progression and success are higher (Wang, Horng, Cheng, & Killman,

2011). Dimitrov's (2012) study showed that employees are satisfied with the promotional opportunities in their company, opposing to the norm that many young professionals have a very slow career progression in the hospitality industry. Nevertheless, organisations that cannot provide career development programmes fulfilling employee's career needs, experience growing levels of dissatisfaction that mirror on employees work attitudes. If the level of the deficiencies is minor, job satisfaction and morale are decreased but in contrast if the level is major, turnover intentions rise, influencing negatively company's growth as well as long-term performance (Chen *et al.*, 2004).

Despite the fact that organisations tend to introduce employee development programmes designed to help entry-level managers move into higher managerial ranks through leadership programmes, Motel 6's approach addressed the development of both managers as well as front-line service employees (Enz & Sigauw, 2000). Hence, emphasis should not be placed only on internal promotions but on the development of hourly employees into managers (Barsky & McDougal, 2007; Costen *et al.*, 2010).

## **2.7. BENEFITS OF TRAINING TO THE ORGANISATION.**

Generally, effective learning and development programmes are vital to any organisation. Organisations train their employees so to engage; educate; enhance; empower; energize and enlighten them known as the 6Es of training (Banfield & Kay, 2008). The value of learning and development reflects on productivity; quality; empowerment; alignment; teamwork; liability; risk; professional development; business conduct, and social responsibility (Aggarwal & Bhargava, 2011; Arms, 2012). Benefits for the organisation consist of improved employee work performance, productivity, work role readiness (Dubois & Rothwell, 2004; Jha & Nair, 2008), reduced learning time which results in less expensive training, decrease in wastage; less accidents; decreased safety violations; less absenteeism; lower labour turnover and higher customer satisfaction (Costen *et al.*, 2010; Somerville, 2007). In addition, by preparing and training employees effectively business objectives are achieved by engaging in a more long-term strategic role either directly or indirectly. The direct role is tracked through the nature of the actual training content. Training can shift from relating merely to the individuals skills and can take care of leadership, group, and organisational issues. Furthermore, training also influences the organisation's culture in an indirect way through the management of individual and group training (Buckley & Caple, 2008).

Besides, organisations are trying to meet their objectives by quantifying associated benefits to each objective (Bahlis, 2008). The following table illustrates training objectives and its measurable benefits.

**Table 2.5: Organisational objectives and its measurable impact.**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Measurable Benefit</b>
Improve productivity	When desired productivity is obtained, productivity gains are realized.
Reduce errors	When new processes are implemented, proficiencies are realized.
Reduce operating costs	When new technology is introduced, financial savings are realized.
Reduce number of personnel	When employees are ready to perform new functions, downsizing or rightsizing can take place.

Source: Bahlis, (2008).

### **2.7.1. Organisational performance improvement.**

The relationship between training and business performance can be represented based on financial performance such as profitability, or determinant factors such as quality of service and resultant factors such as sales growth (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Thomas & Long, 2001). Aragón-Sánchez, Barba-Aragón, and Sanz-Valle (2003) study indicated that training activities such as on-the-job training and in-house training were positively associated with organisational performance. Furthermore, Tracey's and Nathan's (2003) study focusing on restaurant performance found that the full amount of time spent on-job skills training, as well as employee turnover levels, were significantly related to restaurant sales.

According to Harrison (2000), learning caused by training is a factor that possibly has a positive influence on organisational performance and is regarded a key variable to the realization of organisational goals. For instance, not all training programmes have the same outcomes, therefore organisations have to apply a thorough method when designing and implementing training programmes to secure the benefits of improved productivity, employee loyalty, stakeholder value (Pfau & Kay, 2002) and through active learning and development opportunities, aiming for work engagement (Aggarwal & Bhargava, 2011; Bakker, Demerouti, & ten Brummelhuis, 2012). Work engagement is a combination of organisational

measurements to ensure that employees' awareness of their job functions and tasks on which they should concentrate on, clear performance targets by indicating primary and secondary tasks, and awareness of what is important for the organisation in combination with transformational leadership. Moreover, work engagement is beneficial for all employees and is associated with organisational performance (Bakker *et al.*, 2012; Demerouti, 2006).

Bakker *et al.* (2012) study suggested that there is a positive correlation between work engagement and employee performance, predominantly for highly conscientious employees. Organisations that use supervisor-ratings of task performance, contextual performance, and active learning behaviour reported that employees were positively evaluated when they were highly engaged in their work functions. Conscientiousness is perceived as the most effective personality predictor of job performance (Dudley, Orvis, Lebiecki, & Cortina, 2006) and conscientious employees are characterized by being reliable, hardworking, self-disciplined, and persevering hence; this behaviour assists them to transform their drive, commitment, and interest into high-quality performance (Dudley *et al.*, 2006).

### **2.7.2. Productivity, profitability, and decreased turnover.**

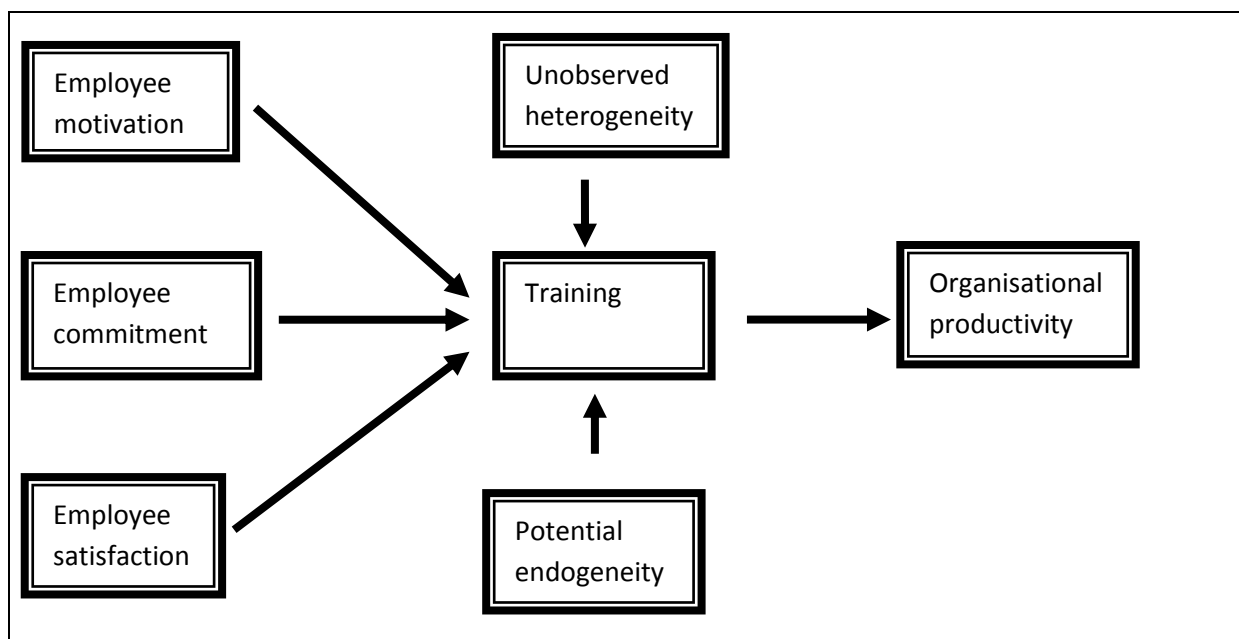
In tourism and in any other economic sector, productivity refers to the efficacy with which assets are utilized, by connecting the quantity of inputs, especially employment of labour and capital, to outputs (Blake *et al.*, 2006). Training is perceived as a key variable in rising organisational productivity, since it is an essential and powerful mechanism in positive achievement of the organisation's goals and objectives leading to higher productivity (Colombo & Stanca, 2008; Konings & Vanormelingen, 2009).

Colombo and Stanca (2008) study indicated that increasing the number of employees joining in training activities and events has a positive and significant effect on organisational productivity. For instance, if the training intensity rises by one per cent, productivity also rises by approximately 0.07 per cent. Training intensity also has an influence on wages, but utilizing wages as a secondary measure of productivity results in significantly undervaluing the effect of training. Therefore, according to Blake *et al.*'s. (2006) study, the measurement of productivity can be performed based on three ways; the output per employee; the output per hour of labour and the total factor productivity, which measures output per unit of inputs. Furthermore, the findings showed that almost all of the businesses in which interviews took place provided some form of training, either formal or informal. The results showed that 92

per cent of respondents agreed that training and skills are important to improving productivity within their firm; 58 per cent of respondents have a formal system of staff training; 82 per cent of respondents engage in training; 67 per cent of respondents agreed that there is a need to train staff to keep up with competitors, and only nine per cent of respondents required high levels of training qualifications from new staff (Blake *et al.*, 2006). Similarly, Porter and Ketels (2003) study showed that rises in productivity result from growths in physical capital, employees' skills, human capital, and total factor productivity that is associated with high levels of innovation, efficient use of technology, and high level of entrepreneurship, ranking as a second driver HC.

Nadeem (2010) proposed a model that associates the impact of job training on job satisfaction, employee motivation, as well as employee commitment resulting to higher organisational productivity.

**Figure 2.1: Impact of training.**



Source: Nadeem, (2010, p.211).

The above model refers to the corporate behaviour before training, after training and the controllable variables. Employee necessitates training to prevail over deficiencies of skills and knowledge. Once this deficiency obstacle is overcome then employees have a clearer understanding of their work duties, resulting in higher levels of job interest, motivation, job satisfaction, organisational commitment leading to high organisational productivity. On the

contrary, if employees are lacking training opportunities provided by the company, they will feel devalued which will result in job dissatisfaction leading to higher turnover (Nadeem, 2010). In addition, organisational competitiveness depends on its reputation for excellence, and employees should have the latest information and the facility to make use of new technological platforms and systems, be able to acclimatize to organisational change, flatter organisations in which multi-skilling and knowledge is a prerequisite, and work efficiently in teams and other collective functions. Employees also distinguished that there is a need for continuous training since it will positive influence their job performance, career progression, and taking on new job assignments. Training also forms part of corporate behaviour. Not only improves the behaviour but also shapes it in agreement with the demands. During all the phases of training, the expected outcomes will be accomplished if unobserved heterogeneity and potential endogeneity are regulated or else despite training effectiveness, the anticipated outcomes will not be realized. So if the training content is more concentrated and consistent, it precedes to preferred skill development in employees resulting to higher job knowledge fit, optimizing maximum resource utilization, and productivity (Nadeem, 2010).

In line with Hoque (1999; 2000), the process by which training is organized and initiated is a key in verifying performance outcomes. For instance, hotels that commenced their human resource management practices as a jointly backing up package outperformed hotels that initiated such practices individually. The study also highlighted that hotels with a belief of service quality overtook those with a strategy grounded on cost reduction. In agreement with the above, Campos-Soria, González, and Romero (2005) showed that the levels of returns per hotel room is positively associated to quality criteria, comprising the friendliness of the staff, and the efficacy of the personalized service.

Employee turnover has a direct impact on an organisation's productivity, financial results (Choi & Dickson, 2009), employee's morale, productivity, reputation and survival of organisations (Hinkin & Tracey, 2000), involvement in culture and in decision-making, organisational stability, and predictable work environment (Cannon & Gustafson, 2002). High turnover is also associated with decreased hotel profits (Simons & Hinkin, 2001; Tracey & Hinkin, 2008) particularly in greater volume for hotel's front-line employees (Walsh & Taylor, 2007) and therefore aiming to reduce turnover can be an alternative option to improve business profitability (Choi & Dickson, 2009; Simons & Hinkin, 2001; Woods & Macaulay, 1989). Other studies have also supported the fact that the amount and quality of training is

linked to turnover and employee loyalty towards the organisation (Berta, 2006; Davidson & Wang, 2011; Mullen, 2004).

Lam *et al.*'s (2002) study on new hotel employees demonstrated that commitment and turnover intentions had a strong correlation with training, and if training is not provided by the organisations, employees' irritations will rise resulting in employee turnover. Similarly, if training time is reduced, front desk employees feel frustration and resign because they cannot satisfactorily execute their job. As a result, it increases the pressure to the remaining employees resulting in reduced guest service (Hinkin & Tracey, 2010).

With turnover rates as high as 300 per cent in the hospitality industry (Hotel News Resource, 2000), it is proven that employee turnover contributes a high cost for the organisations (Choi & Dickson, 2009; Davidson & Wang, 2011). Turnover costs are divided into five major categories: pre-departure; recruitment; selection; orientation and training; and productivity loss (Choi & Dickson, 2009; Tracey & Hinkin, 2008). Orientation and training costs is one of the turnover costs categories and include those monies spent on orientation, printed materials, trainer wages, and those monies due to reduced productivity of the trainee and the trainer (Cannon & Gustafson, 2002; Tracey & Hinkin, 2008). According to Hinkin and Tracey (2011) study, regarding the learning curve, employees reported that it took them much longer to become competent at a task than what their superiors reported. Approximately, it took a short period to learn between 75 to 80 per cent of a job, via orientation, formal training, and on-the-job training. The remaining 20 per cent took longer since it was related to gain mastery and provide great service. Therefore, it was suggested that the learning curve has two stages, firstly to gain proficiency and secondly to gain mastery (Hinkin & Tracey, 2010). Productivity loss costs include the weaken productivity of an employee who will be departing, since there is lack of commitment; the time invested for the employee to learn procedures and develop proficiency on his/her job; decreased in productivity by the disruptions caused by new employees, and opportunity costs allied with the vacancy such as lost revenues and/or sales (Cannon & Gustafson, 2002; O'Connell & Kung, 2007; Tracey & Hinkin, 2008). Moreover, lost productivity represents as much as 75 per cent of the expense of turnover for some positions, with an average of over 50 per cent for all positions. Based on a sample of 33 hotels, an average cost of \$5,700 is associated for lower-complexity jobs and \$10,000 for higher-complexity jobs (Hinkin & Tracey, 2008).

Hence, in order to decrease turnover and retain key personnel, Deery (2008) and Choi and Dickson (2009) suggested that training provision during work time, job enrichment, as well as reward systems are strategies to maintain quality employees. Besides, other actions referred to the provision of flexible working hours; flexible work arrangements; provision of adequate resources; identification of correct staffing levels so to reduce work and stress overload; adequate breaks; provision of different types of leave such as sabbaticals, and care's leave; rewards for employees upon successful completion of tasks; organisation of staff functions and provision of health and well-being opportunities (Deery, 2008).

### **2.7.3. Customer satisfaction.**

Employees' training impacts the customer face interactions positively because of the delivery of personalized service (Baydoun, Rose, & Emperado, 2001), the efficiency of employees' listening and attention skills, and the provision of clear explanations and answers to guests' requests. However, inefficient training reflects to the increase of customers' dissatisfaction levels and hence complaints due to employees' incapacity meeting customers' wants and needs (Ford, 2001). Hence, well-trained employees can better satisfy customer needs and exceed customer expectations (Rowden & Conine, 2005; Thomas & Long, 2001). Based on Ford's (2001) study on customer service exchange, a distinction has been made between satisfied customers due to personalized service from those employees who were efficient in their listening and clear explanations and dissatisfied customers due to the inability to adjust their pace and interaction to meet customers' specific needs. Therefore, the accomplishment of positive service encounters depend on the investments in education and training of employees (Gustavsson, Ostrom, Johansson, & Mossberg, 2006; Wong & Sohal, 2003).

### **2.7.4. Succession Planning and Talent Management.**

Instead of focusing only on employee turnover, succession planning and development is critical too when over the next few years 50 per cent of the workforce will be eligible for retirement not only in managerial levels but operatives too, who are key customer-facing employees and support staff (Hewitt, 2009). If those employees at lower levels are ignored, then organisations will face loss of talent and increase costs. Filling in vacancies, incurring costs of headhunters and recruitment agencies and facing financial losses due to lower productivity are challenging obstacles (Dalgaard, 2008). Hence, succession planning strategies and tactics should be available at all levels in the organisations.



According to Cameron (2007), organisations should concentrate on developing talent by being proactive, making it a priority at all levels, embracing a systematic approach, being clear and flexible about the needs and by offering potential successors a wide-ranging education. Utilization of this approach results in developing internal talent and removing the organisation from the potential competition for an even decreasing external talent pool. The provision of education introduces a greater flexibility in the workforce, allowing employees to move horizontally or vertically within the organisational charts. Similarly, Ready and Conger (2007) discussed further the concept of making organisations ‘talent factories’ by identifying two components; functionality and vitality. They explained functionality as the means and instruments that support the proficiency of putting the right people with the right skills in the right places at the right time. On the other hand, vitality referred to the attitude and frame of mind of individuals who are responsible for the talent development across all levels. For instance, companies such as Microsoft, Southwest Airlines, and SAS Institute are models in the way they encourage and handle critical talent, have a strong belief on continuous learning and growth and recognise that the greatest lessons do not take place in the classroom, but on the job. These companies also appreciate that positive relationships elevate the performance of critical talent to new levels (Athey, 2004).

However, career progression and education come hand to hand. According to Boella and Goss-Turner (2005, p.137) the progression career path of a hospitality and tourism employee to reach a managerial position takes up to four years and a pre-requisite is an MBA in regards to educational qualifications.

**Table 2.6: Progression career path of front-line employees to managers within the hospitality and tourism industry.**

Year	Position	Education
0-6 months	Front-line employee in a department	Vocational training or first year of university
6-12 months	Front-line employee exposed and worked in different department	Continued vocational training
2-3 years	Supervisor role in a specific department or management trainee position in different departments	Second and third year of university
4 years	Assistant manager of a specific department	MBA
5-6 years	Manager of a department or of a specific function	MBA
7-8 years	Assistant to general manager or hotel manager	
9-10 years	General manager of a medium-size hotel unit	

Source: Boella and Goss-Turner, 2005, p.137.

In accordance with Mary Jo Dolasinski (Vice President of Learning Services for White Lodging Services), where development of hourly workers into management positions is vital to company's success, the company's goal is 65 per cent of all promote-able positions to be promoted internally. Hence, the time allocated and sufficient energy and resources so to provide career path-ing and training programmes on all the properties to prepare employees for leadership roles is crucial (Weinstein, 2008).

Overall, it is apparent that HR practices such as recruiting, selection, development and career, succession planning form part of a broader concept leading to talent management (Lewis & Heckman, 2006). Factors contributing towards talent management include workforce skills, supply and demand, growth, and attrition (Lewis & Heckman, 2006). Talent is something praiseworthy that particular individuals own and as suggested by Gladwell (2010) talent is equivalent to ten years or 10,000 hours capitalized in a particular line of work or area. Talent

management in any organisation is important due to retention of workforce and increased employee engagement (Morton, 2005). Pruis (2011) stated that organisational talent development misrepresents a 'pro-bono' investment on the part of the organisations. However, it is an investment in organisational needs. These organisational needs refer to succession planning (Lawler, 2008), the achievement of business strategy (Scullion & Collings, 2011), the enhancement of leadership bench-strength (Bryan & Joyce, 2007), and the development of star employees (Jones, 2008).

Talent management activities are needed to develop talent in order to respond to present and foreseen business pressures (Korotov, 2007). A traditional approach highlights its concentration on blending classroom development, E-learning and on-the-job development that develops the competencies of talent to carry out effectively and improve their potential (Conger, 2010). On the other hand, accelerated talent development programmes consist of on-going intensive training, extensive use of simulation tools, structured projects, and experiences to drive learning and self-managed development processes (Silzer & Church, 2010). The periods for this kind of programmes range between one to three years aiming to develop high potential individuals occupying higher or broader roles (Silzer & Church, 2010). The types of programmes to enable talent development fall into four categories: formal programmes; relationship based developmental experiences; job-based developmental experiences; and informal/non formal developmental activities (Conger, 2010). In addition, Wilson, Van Velsor, Chandrasekar, and Criswell (2014, p.4) proposed a *"70:20:10 strategy, whereby 70 per cent of talent development occurs through work activities; 20 per cent through relationships; and 10 per cent through formal development activities"*.

## **2.8. RETURN ON HUMAN CAPITAL INVESTMENT (HCI) MEASUREMENTS.**

Organisations with strong HRM practices pass on favourable treatment towards employees, whilst the employees respond towards that treatment with a positive attitude towards the organisations (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960). According to the Social Exchange Theory by Blau (1964), based on the assumption that individuals set up relationships with others based on the expectations of return from invested resources, the Social Exchange Theory hypothesises that all human relationships are formed by the use of a subjective cost-benefit analysis and the comparison of alternatives (Chambel & Sobral, 2011). There are numerous

ways of calculating ROI of training interventions through a benefits and costs analysis (Chambel & Sobral, 2011), utility analysis (Sturman, 2003), using the Kirkpatrick's (1976) and Phillip's model (1994), calculating the payback period (Echols, 2005), as well as the value of money over time (Rowden, 2005).

### **2.8.1 Benefits and Costs Analysis.**

According to Chambel and Sobral (2011), the process of calculating ROI involves calculating costs and benefits. Benefits consist of things such as material or financial gains, social status, and emotional comforts, and costs include of sacrifices of time, money, or lost opportunities. Therefore, outcome is defined to be the difference between the benefits and the costs:

$$\text{Outcome} = \text{Benefits} - \text{Costs}$$

However, because individuals have dissimilar expectations of relationships, the level of satisfaction can be dependent on more than one outcome. Hence, satisfaction is computed as the difference between the outcome and the comparison level.

$$\text{Satisfaction} = \text{Outcome} - \text{Comparison level}$$

Another concept to look into is the level of dependence the individual has in a relationship. If the individual has many options and alternatives then that individual is less dependent on the relationship. Therefore, the level of dependence is computed as the difference between the outcome and the comparison of alternatives.

Dependence = Outcome – Comparison level of alternatives (Chambel & Sobral, 2011).

Calculating costs could be done by phase and a general breakdown of phases for costs analysis comprise “*project launch, analysis, design, development, formative evaluation, start-up consisting of new equipment and materials, training, decreased performance, and on-going implementation and summative evaluation*” (Silber, 2002, p.1). In addition, costs categories should be identified and hence, organisations calculate the salaries, overheads, direct costs but not necessarily the opportunity or lost-opportunity costs (Silber, 2002). Calculating benefits is not an accurate process, since it is based on what managers perceive as benefits, rather than on any “*objective reality*” of what benefits are (Silber, 2002, p.3). Hence, the formula available to calculate benefits is as follows:

Post intervention productivity level

- Pre-intervention productivity level

x dollar value of a unit performance or individual salary over a time period

x percentage of time on job spent performing tasks impacted by the intervention

x percentage of productivity improvement attributable to the intervention

x number of participants in the intervention

= Benefit of intervention

Even though the same information is collected from the organisation the results are very different, meaning that different ways of computing the benefits produce different numbers. Therefore, what is critical is to identify which computation the organisation considers valid (Silber, 2002). Companies place more emphasis on training when there are measurable returns for training as far as training is perceived as an expense instead of an investment. Therefore, a cost-benefit link between training expenses and outcomes is desirable (Conrade *et al.*, 1994).

### **2.8.2. Utility Analysis**

According to Sturman (2003), another way for quantifying the value of hospitality human resource interventions is through utility analysis (UA). The utility model can be utilized to a specific intervention and the benefit can be described as the product of three elements; the quantity of employees affected; the quality of the effect; and the dollar value of improved performance. The comparison of the costs and benefits of several training programmes defines the utility value of the training by analysing the financial gains or losses that follow because of training. Hence, lack of quantifiable benefits can lead to the discontinuation of training programmes.

The utility analysis equation stands for:

$$\text{Utility} = \text{Benefits} - \text{Costs}$$

$$\text{Utility} = (\text{Quantity} \times \text{Quality}) - \text{Costs}$$

Quantity	Quality	Costs
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$$\Delta \text{Utility} = [T \times N] \times [\bar{z}_x \times r + d_t] \times SD_y - \text{Costs}$$

$\Delta U$  = utility change from the human resource intervention

$T$  = Average future tenure of those affected

$N$  = Number of employees affected (hired or trained)

$\bar{z}_x$  = Average Z-score of the predictor of hired employees

$r$  = Correlation between a predictor and criterion

$d_t$  = The average net gain in performance exhibited by employees affected by the intervention

$SD_y$  = Dollar value of an employee performing one standard deviation above average

Costs = Cost of acquiring and administering the human resource intervention (Sturman, 2003, p.107).

### **2.8.3. The Kirkpatrick and Phillips model.**

Similarly, Kirkpatrick (1975) examined the attributes to be counted in the computation of cost-benefit analysis as associated to the training attempts in the human resources department. He concentrated on the changeability of learning processes, and the following up of employees' performance on their job function, and the influence these functions produced on costs against the benefits. According to Kirkpatrick (1975), the individual influenced all other functions reflected static as well as variable, and lacking suitable training eventually had the most negative influence on revenue, asset management, yield, and Total Quality Management (TQM). Hence, the human element was crucial but the most ignored financial attribute in all calculations in the company liabilities. The main trait of that challenge is the following up of benefits back to training, so that quality effect can be calculated (Kline & Harris, 2008). When training is evaluated an organisation should look at the efficiency of resources comprising of the cost of training, the cost of facilities used, the cost of materials needed, the cost of time away from the actual workplace, and the benefits that follow by utilizing those resources (DiPietro, 2004).

Dr. Donald Kirkpatrick's Model (TKM)'s four-level evaluation refers to reaction, learning, behavior, and results, which is a distinct guide for evaluating workplace training (Kirkpatrick, 1975). 'Reaction' is normally measured in surveys distributed to all the participants at the end of each training session; 'Learning' refers to the acquisition of skills and knowledge realized

by the participants and usually measured pre and post-tests; 'Behavior' concentrates on whether the attained skills and knowledge are put in practice in the workplace and is normally measured at the workplace three months or more after training and 'Results' or final outcomes of training in regards to organisational goals. Dr. Jack J. Phillips (1994) added a fifth dimension to the TKM Model by incorporating 'ROI' that refers to the return-on-investment of the four levels outcomes (Skillnets Networked Learning, 2005). The ROI of training is formed by contrasting the cost of several training methods with the positive conversions that take place in an organisation because of training (Van Buren & Erskine, 2002).

The formula for ROI is:

$$\text{ROI (\%)} = \frac{\text{Total Programme Benefits} - \text{Total Programmes Costs}}{\text{Total Programme Costs}} \times 100\%$$

Total Programme Costs

Or

$$\text{ROI} = \frac{\text{Net Programme Benefits}}{\text{Total Programme Costs}} \times 100\%$$

Total Programme Costs

To calculate the benefit/cost ratio (BCR) total benefits are divided by the cost.

$$\text{BCR} = \frac{\text{Total Benefits}}{\text{Total Programme Costs}}$$

In addition another key technique introduced by Phillips is 'isolation' which refers to the barrier of evaluating the business impact of training from other factors such as interest rate changes, marketing programmes and employee incentives. 'Intangibles' is another refinement in the TKM model since some results of training cannot be calculated easily or translated in monetary terms. For instance these 'soft' business measures can include interpersonal skills, team development, communications training, customer satisfaction, pressure decrease, and employee satisfaction which are consider as intangibles but still need to be reported alongside

with ‘hard’ business results such as growth in sales, decrease in wastage, and time savings (Phillips, 2003).

#### **2.8.4. Advantages and disadvantages of computing Return-On-Investment (ROI) in hospitality organisations.**

Computing the ROI of training activities encourages rationalization of existing and future budgets; develops training programme choice; influences positively the tracing of expenses; raises the forecast of revenue focusing on enriched service and production selection; expands the responsiveness of the level of accidents; staff resignation rate; and non-attendances of employees; and increases benefit package selection (Phillips, 1996; Rowden, 2005). Organisations that have successfully implemented ROI have showed that the computation is only been performed in large company – wide training programmes such as employee orientation, corporate sales training initiatives, and entry-level supervisory training programmes (Kline & Harris, 2008). According to the employees responsible for computing ROI, minor training activities and programmes with minimum rate of recurrence do not permit ROI computations because of the energy involved in handling and computing the data (Kline & Harris, 2008). Others believe that ROI computation can be accomplished for planning training programmes, finding out employees’ needs, and increasing general performance (Fitz-Enz & Davidson, 2002). Despite the fact, many organisations gather data on the headcount of trained employees and the associated costs of training each employee, most do not set up metrics that link training sessions to the final aims and objectives such as improved sales, generating new customers, and increased productivity (Stern, 2011). As profit margins decrease for some private sectors, it is crucial for organisations to monitor how they spend their limited financial resources and ensure a balance between the needs of employees training and development and financial expenditure (DiPietro, 2004). It appears that, no other workplace area exists on which so much money is invested with not enough liability as training, and in most cases the justification for investing all that money is because employees really enjoy training (Worthen, 2001). Two trends affecting training is the raised pressure from shareholders assigned on trainers for producing short-term profits. As a result, there is a superior stress on trainees to create results and on training departments to demonstrate a ROI for the delivered training programmes (Van Buren & Erskine, 2002).

Moreover, finance managers, revenue managers and Chief Financial Officers (CFO) can follow up on money, time, product, and the value of real estate but main challenges are to



follow up the different variables related to the impact of training which is biased to a great extent (Kline & Harris, 2008). Organisations acknowledge training as a cost, showing all HCIs as expenses on their companies' financial statements and not as assets estimated to produce revenues (Brown, 2001). Even though the calculation of ROI is not totally accurate the same reflects to calculations and forecasts of many business analysis measurements such as yield, revenue, asset or total quality management (TQM) which are primarily guestimates (Kline & Harris, 2008; Parry, 1996) and despite that, these are important measurements for benchmarking success or failure (Philips, 1996).

Phillips (1997) and Kline and Harris (2008) looked at barriers calculating ROI comprising of lack of skills by human resources professionals to comprehend and collect the required data, cost of time and appeal in the ROI process, insufficient and unsound needs assessments analysis, worry of failure or loss of trustworthiness if incorrect suppositions are utilized or if the numbers that are presented are not acceptable by higher management. Although businesses follow up each data point of an advertising campaign, they frequently disregard the ROI on their training investments (Stern, 2011) despite the fact that annual investments in training can extent over 2 per cent of an organization's total payroll spending (Van Buren and Erskine, 2002). According to Brown (2001), ROI computation has no fixed value, it is hard to present without significant error, and it is an inaccurate fraction or ratio because of the time worth of information. On the other hand, Kline and Harris (2008) suggested that is a computation that provides information in regards to organisational important assets, and its internal customers meaning its employees. Past studies by researchers and human resources professionals believed that calculating the ROI is a waste of time and it is a labour intensive process (Flynn, 1998) even though hospitality managers admit that ROI should be calculated (Kline & Harris, 2008).

Santos and Stuart (2003) study argued that since the financial company named FinanceCo was investing heavily in training, management concerns raised in regards to monitoring costs and determining the effectiveness of the training investment. One of the identified weak areas was related to training evaluation performed through 'happy sheets'. Consequently, the purpose of the new training evaluation was dependent on generating feedback for quality control purposes on the design and delivery of training interventions, on assuring that through training investment employees' performance increased and on delineating the responsibility for learning between trainers, trainees and management. As a result, the training evaluation

commenced pre and post-training involving not only the trainees but line managers too documenting the anticipated, common benefits. Training practitioners then reviewed the documents which formed part of the nomination procedure. Therefore, all trainees completed the training evaluation form right after the completion of the programme and after six months the agreed benefits were reviewed in a form of a structured self-report assessing the achieved benefits and transfer of training in the work environment. The only drawback was that line-managers were not involved during 6 months review. Even so, training evaluation was made a responsibility of the trainee and the line manager, so to inspire employees to be accountable of their own development, as well as management ownership for employees' development. Since it was hard to quantify the benefits as a result of training investment, a qualitative approach was adopted in terms of improved customer service, better interpersonal relationships amongst others.

A recommendation to compute ROI lies on governmental resources that can be utilized to encourage organisations to conduct ROI analysis of their training programmes. Assisting organisations to measure ROI could address this issue (Bartel, 2000). A recent study conducted by the ROI Institute, a Birmingham, Ala.-based research and consulting organisation, these metrics signify a lot to Chief Executive Officers (CEOs). Moreover, 92 out of 96 Fortune 500 CEOs said that they are most concerned in discovering the business effect of their learning and development programmes, however only eight per cent expressed that ROI calculation is evident within their organisations (Stern, 2011).

According to the annual survey in learning and talent development conducted by the CIPD (2011) the findings showed that the evaluation of learning and talent development is an overlooked area. Despite the fact that 83 per cent of respondents reported evaluating learning and training within their premises, one in six accounting for 17 per cent reported that evaluation does not take place. Organisations with over 250 employees are most likely to evaluate training and learning corresponding to 88 per cent in contrast to small medium enterprises accounting for 70 per cent. The evaluation processes are conducted through the use of 'happy sheets' by the majority of organisations accounting for 93 per cent. Large size organisations are more likely to use this type of evaluation method based on 76 per cent of organisations with less than 49 employees, 91 per cent of organisations with a number of workforce between 250-299 employees, 97 per cent of organisations with over 5000 employees. Approximately 56 of organisations use stories and statements of employees to

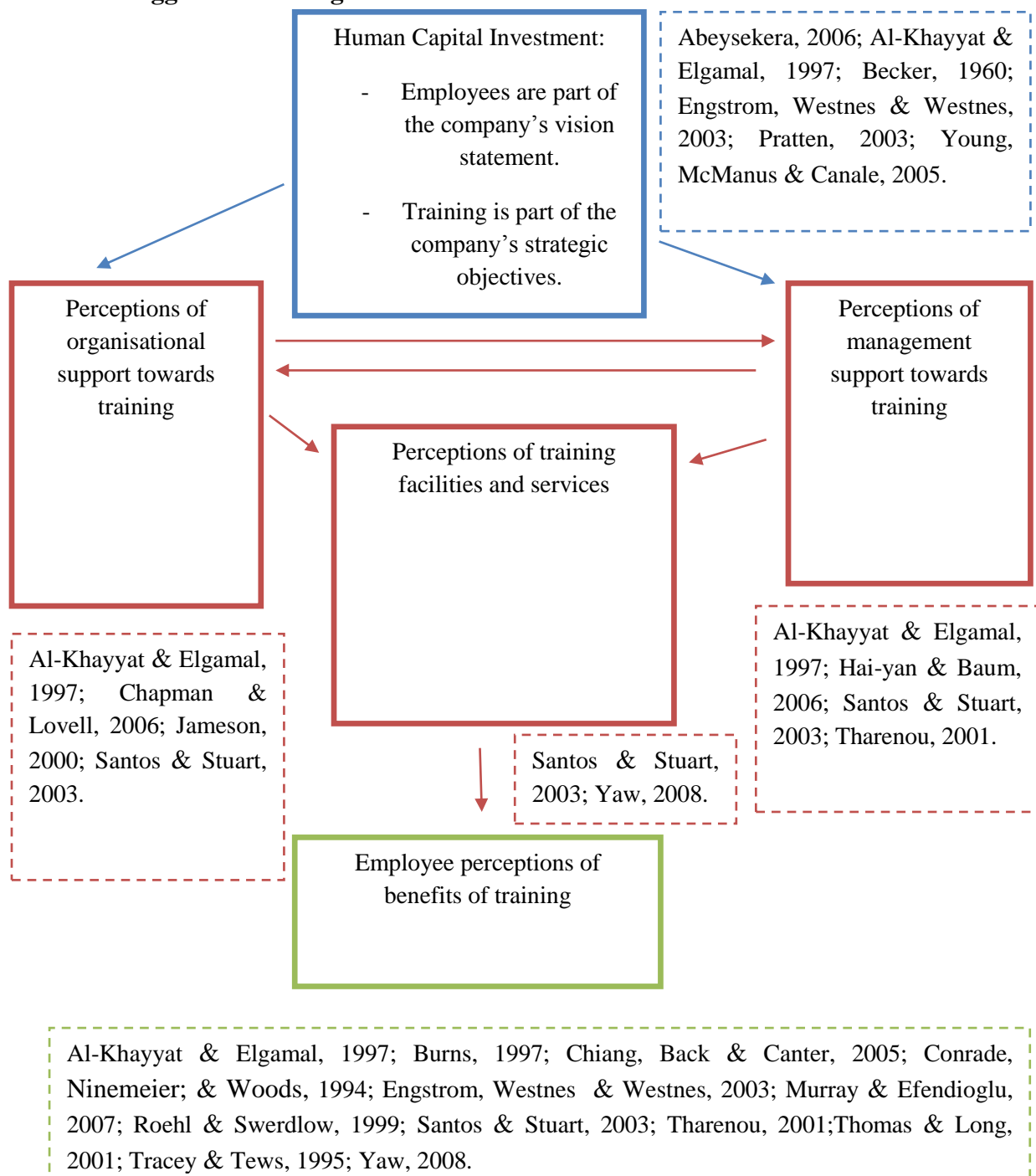
assess learning. Just under half accounting for 48 per cent evaluate return on anticipated outcomes and 42 per cent assess the effect of key performance indicators. Only 28 per cent calculate ROI or carry out a cost-benefit analysis. Preparing employees for learning interventions is conducted by just over half of the organisations regularly, and a further quarter sporadically in order to detect those employees or teams will advantage from the learning interventions prior to their participation in a training programme and talk over with direct managers the organisational expectations of the training and learning intervention. Nevertheless, approximately one in seven businesses across different sectors hardly ever or by no means prepares employees for learning interventions. The findings suggested that organisations should adopt a more proactive attitude to prepare employees for learning interventions and to set up comprehensive evaluations so to ensure individual and organisational needs are achieved in the short and long term.

## **2.9. CHAPTER SUMMARY.**

This literature review chapter was set out to explore the concept of HCI and training within the hospitality industry for front line employees. It was notable, that the hospitality and tourism sectors contribute to employment but due to its negative image attract less qualified employees than other industries facing challenges such as high labour turnover, low retention rates, and lack of new entrants in the industry. Hence, the need for constant training interventions by hospitality organisations to enhance and develop employees' skills set needed is crucial. Human capital theory is affirmed only if hospitality organisations invest on their employees by viewing employees as assets rather than expenses. By doing so, any type of training intervention either generic or specific will result in numerous likelihood benefits for employees as well as for the organisations. Furthermore, the organisational support and management support towards the HCI as a mean of training are of a great importance since are the pillars of HC. In addition, the need for an adequate training environment and facilities so to deliver effectively the training programmes using training methods and techniques, precise training content linked to the company's TNA, training philosophy, and expertise of trainers contribute positive towards the HCI. As a result, the benefits of HC can be seen from two different perspectives; the organisational benefits and the employee benefits. Organisational benefits include increased organisational commitment, profitability, productivity, retention and employee benefits consist of higher job satisfaction, increase in employees' skill set, work confidence, motivation, and career progression. Lastly, HCI is

financed by organisations but ROI is hardly measured resulting in a massive gap and lack of quantifiable information between investment and returns. As a result, based on the literature review and the aims of this study, the following suggested model is designed to guide this study and illustrated below.

### Model 1: Suggested Training Model.



The conceptual framework identified that the heart of this research is the concept of HCI, which was to be explored through training. The five constructs relate to corporate decisions that training affects not only the front-line employees but also the entire company. The subjective evaluation of their efforts in investing in human capital leads to the question of organisational and management support which can be either beneficial, detrimental, or a combination of both. The study of the perceptions of organisational and management support towards training is therefore inseparable from the examination. Furthermore, the study intends to measure the influence that organisational and management support has towards the training environment and the delivery and provision of training interventions. The training environment and the provision of training have a direct influence on the benefits perceived because of training and therefore needs to be addressed.

## **CHAPTER 3 – TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY IN DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (U.A.E.).**

### **3.1. INTRODUCTION.**

This second part of the literature review aims to provide a clear overview of Dubai, a sheikhdom in the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) and its booming hospitality and tourism sector. It discusses how the U.A.E. has managed to position itself amongst the top luxury destinations internationally and considers the growth and diversification of various services and products such as travel, hospitality, retail, and finance. Moreover, it examines the country's demographics and labour composition, which are heavily dependent on expatriates and labour migrants from the Indian subcontinent.

This chapter will also consider the educational provision in terms of the negative perceptions associated with studying hospitality and the dearth of UAE nationals attracted to the industry, which is generally thought to be an outcome of strong family values, culture, traditions, faith, and lack of acceptance by other members of the community and strong preferences for government sector jobs.

Lastly, the efforts by governmental officials in regards to the implementation and effectiveness of U.A.E.'s localisation strategy are discussed. Therefore, the main aim of this chapter is to examine the current human capital needs for employees in the hospitality sector in Dubai (U.A.E.).

### **3.2. OVERVIEW OF DUBAI AND THE U.A.E.**

After the British departure in 1971, Dubai along with Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al Quwain, Fujairah, and Ras Al Khaimah formed the federation of the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.), within the Gulf region. The U.A.E. is considered a single nation, with Abu Dhabi being the capital and there is no uniformity in relation to the tourism development and its planning, co-ordination, and marketing at a national level (Sharpley, 2008).

Originally, a small fishing town, Dubai being one of the seven autonomous sheikhdoms has now been transformed into a leading regional trading hub in the Middle East (Henderson, 2006) due to its strategic location being the crossroad of trade and commerce between Europe, USA, Asia and Africa (DIFC, 2009). Dubai is a sheikhdom governed by the

Maktoum family and is the second largest emirate within the U.A.E. (Lohmann, Albers, Koch, & Pavlovich, 2008). Due to its progressive and open nature of economic development, which is in contrast to other GCC countries, the international society looks to the U.A.E. and particularly Dubai as a model for a new, booming Middle East (Randeree, 2012). The population of the U.A.E. in 2013 reached nine million, with a GDP of US \$ 396.2 billion, and US \$ 43,876 GDP per capita (The Global Competitiveness Report, 2014-2015). Dubai has a sub-tropical climate from temperatures ranging as low as 10.5 degrees to a high of 48 degrees Celcius and high levels of humidity during the months of June to September (DIFC, 2009).

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) consists of the following members: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the U.A.E. The GCC countries are resource rich, labour importing countries, which are described as producers and exporters of oil and gas and have large shares of foreign or expatriate residents, who correspond to a high percentage of the population (O'Sullivan, Rey, & Mendez, 2011). The six nations of the GCC have common characteristics such as high dependence on expatriates and migrant labour; high levels of citizen unemployment in some of the GCC members; education systems that are currently being improved; an inadequate gender balance in the workforce; and low levels of private sector employment of nationals (Randeree, 2012).

Based on the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) report 2014-2015 ranking as cited in The Global Competitiveness Report, 2014-2015, out of 144 countries the table below demonstrates the Gulf economies in the GCI ranking, with UAE leading the region at 12<sup>th</sup>, followed by Qatar at 16<sup>th</sup> and Saudi Arabia at 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Table 3.1: Gulf economies in the GCI ranking.**

	<b>GCI 2014-2015 and 2013-2014 comparisons</b>			
<b>Economy</b>	<b>Rank (out of 144)</b>	<b>Score (1-7)</b>	<b>Rank among (2013-2014) economies</b>	<b>GCI 2013- 2014 rank (out of 148)</b>
United Arab Emirates	12	5.33	12	19
Qatar	16	5.24	16	13
Saudi Arabia	24	5.06	24	20
Kuwait	40	4.51	40	36
Bahrain	44	4.48	44	43
Oman	46	4.46	46	33
Yemen	142	2.79	1.43	147

Source: Adapted from The Global Competitiveness Report, 2014-2015, p.13.

The U.A.E. ranking 12<sup>th</sup>, demonstrates that the country is at an advance stage of development. Its competitiveness is a reflection of its high infrastructure quality where it ranks third and its highly efficient goods markets ranking third. In addition, other competitive advantages include the strong macroeconomic permanence ranking at fifth, and positive aspects of the country's institutions including high public trust in politicians ranking third, and high government efficiency ranking fifth (GCI, 2014-2015). Furthermore, the U.A.E., Qatar and Kuwait have remained very stable in terms of political uncertainty without a negative impact, since they are perceived as safer (Choufany, 2011) in contrast with other GCC nations such as Bahrain, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen where demonstrations; imposition of three-month emergency rule; governmental re-structures have taken place (Alpen Capital, 2011). Yet, some concerns are been expressed in regards to the monarchy which has full support by locals, but lack of democracy poses long-term risks since participation is higher in neighbouring countries. In addition, the continuous territorial dispute with Iran and the poor living conditions of labour migrants can lead to demonstrations and subsequently to domestic instability. Another concern is that the UAE's currency known as Dirham (AED) is pegged to the dollar, reducing the country's control over monetary



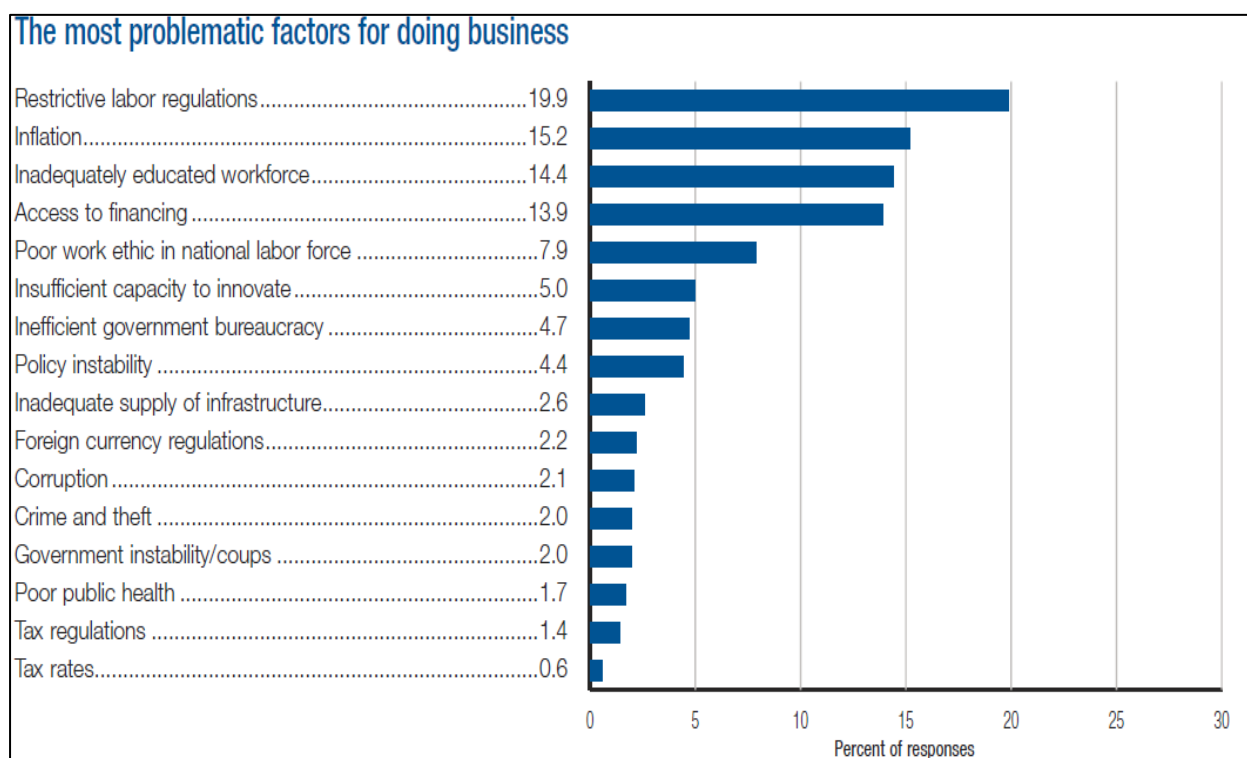
policy and decreasing its options to deal effectively with inflation. Furthermore, the localisation strategy, which emphasizes locals to be employed in the public sector instead of expats, can decrease the skill set accessible for businesses (BMI, Q3, 2014).

The U.A.E. in general has spent billions of US Dollars on infrastructure, which represents 37 per cent of total infrastructure project value within the construction, oil and gas, petrochemicals, power and water, and waste sectors in the region. Investments in major projects associated with the real estate, tourism, and leisure sectors are increasingly apparent in Abu Dhabi and Dubai where the growth in international tourist arrivals are impacting on the hospitality sector which increased by 13 per cent in 2014 (UAE Interact, 2014).

Whilst oil exports have been vital for the development of Dubai since 1960s, in 2011 the direct contribution of travel and tourism to the GDP was 83.8 billion AED equating to 6.5 per cent of total GDP. Forecasts estimate a rise of 4.6 per cent in 2012, and thereafter a rise of 4.2 per cent per annum from 2012 to 2022, with a contribution of 132.4 billion AED by 2022 (WTTC, 2012b). Despite the expansion within the Arab region, a 2011 Executive Opinion Survey conducted by the World Economic Forum identified that the region is dependent on the private sector in order to create a sufficient number of work opportunities in a sustainable manner despite all the problematic factors for conducting business in the Arab world.

Despite the growth in the GCC countries, a report produced by Alpen Capital which is a firm regulated by the Dubai Financial Services Authority in 2011, supported that the region faces many challenges. Primarily, in terms of ‘the Middle East political instability’, ‘the global economic insecurity and seasonality’, ‘oversupply of rooms’, ‘talent management’, ‘sustainability’, ‘shortage of operators’, ‘rising cost of construction’ and ‘project financing’. According to Hanouz and Dusek (2011), the seven highest challenges are related to financial access, restrictive labour regulations, inefficient government bureaucracy, inadequately educated workforce, corruption, poor work ethics in the national labour force, and an inadequate supply of infrastructure. Moreover, the Global Competitiveness report (2014-2015) highlighted the most challenging aspects for conducting business in the UAE. The graph bellows illustrates that the three top challenges relate to the ‘restrictive labour regulations’, followed by ‘inflation’, and ‘inadequately educated workforce’ amongst others.

**Figure 3.1: The most problematic factors for doing business in the U.A.E.**



Source: The Global Competitiveness report (2014-2015, p.374)

In regards to nationals entering the private sector, Middle Eastern countries face a significant challenge that can be attributed to four main factors. Firstly, the attraction of cheap skilled migrant labour reduces wages and incentives for nationals to enter many parts of the economy (Bremmer, 2004). Secondly, the robust preference of nationals to seek employment in the public sector as an outcome of higher remuneration, considerably higher job security, and a less challenging work environment compared to the private sector (Mellahi, 2007). Thirdly, the educational system in the Gulf countries which has been generally unsuccessful in delivering adequate education and is still undergoing vital development but also fails to prepare students for the demanding standards and attitude need to work in the private sector (De Boer & Turner, 2007; Harry, 2007; Randeree, 2012). Lastly, the common view of employers in the private sector suggesting that, nationals are more undisciplined and challenging to manage (Mellahi & Wood, 2002).

In spite of these challenges Dubai is currently ranked 27<sup>th</sup> amongst international business cities followed by Abu Dhabi ranking 62<sup>nd</sup>, Doha 64<sup>th</sup> and Riyadh 65<sup>th</sup>. Dubai's position

highlights its strong business activities and its leadership position in human capital followed by information exchange, cultural experience and political engagement (A.T. Kearney Global Cities Index, 2014).

Currently, top of the governmental agenda are the improvement of service sectors such as tourism, healthcare, arts and culture, sports and creation (Amaize, Mady, & Benson, 2011). Moreover, the Dubai government recently launching its 2021 Vision which aims to create a city that is the 'preferred place to work and live' and despite the political unrest in neighbouring countries Dubai and generally the U.A.E. is considered as a 'safe haven' for tourists and investors (BMI, Q3, 2014, p.14). As a result, the re-orientation of the country's development model due to the impact of the economic crisis demands an investment in the medical and educational arenas.

Education not only refers to the improvement of the quality of teaching, and the relevance of the curriculum, but it also refers to individual's encouragement to attend schools at primary and secondary levels (Hanouz & Dusek, 2011; The Global Competitiveness Report, 2014-2015). The U.A.E. focuses continuously in the improvement and provision of equal opportunities to all its citizens regarding education, since it is a high priority for the sustainable progression of the country (Balian & Malhem, 2010). As stated by His Highness the President on the topic of human development "*Man is the most precious value and the most important element in the State*" (World Data on Education, 2010/2011, p.1). Therefore, the main objectives of education fall under the national investment of the country with the adequate provision of necessary facilities. Besides, education is perceived as a main contributor towards the stability and national security and furthermore, it has to match national and community needs. Hence, educational quality needs improvement in regards to the efficiency of educational institutions, the performance rates, as well as the resources. Finally, the education policy has its roots on objective principles so to allow high performers to distinguish themselves in all fields (Word Data on Education, 2010/2011).

Nevertheless, in the U.A.E., there is still lack of skilled and qualified graduates in the tourism and hospitality industry, with only six institutions in the entire country offering specialized hospitality and tourism educational programmes ranging from diplomas to post-graduate degrees (Amaize, 2011; Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority, 2012). Furthermore, Dr. Ayoun Kazim (Managing Director of the education cluster at Dubai Academic City and Knowledge Village) argued that the market is overwhelmed with educational programmes and degrees

without really concentrating in areas such as hospitality and tourism, transport, logistics and medicine. By 2020, the workforce in the region will request one and a half million people in the industry and they should be approximately 100,000 graduates per annum, whereas currently there is only a small fraction of that graduating. Since tourism and hospitality is booming, there is a need that has to be addressed and there should be a focus on these sectors that contribute greatly to the country's GDP (Swan, 2010a). This suggests that the general quality of existing human resources manpower fails to meet the demand of a booming industry. A positive indication for the industry and the potential for providing relevant skilled and knowledgeable employees is the high awareness of high school students and undergraduates to these specialized hospitality and tourism programmes (Amaize *et al.*, 2011).

Another area of concern for the hospitality and tourism sector is the lack of vocational education in the U.A.E. (Swan, 2010b). Dr.Naji Al Mahdi (Head of the National Institute for Vocational Education) suggested that the U.A.E. has neglected vocational education in support of poor quality academic degrees, which is causing a failure to create a technically skilled labour force in areas such as tourism, logistics, and retail. This is supported by Deloitte's Report (2014) on the skills shortage on the run up to 2020, where the top ten skills required to support the EXPO include customer service, hospitality, events, and tourism. The Dubai Government has recently acknowledged these issues via new projects such as a new vocational college specialising in hospitality and tourism programmes. This project will be launched in 2017 and a new incentive to enhance the opportunities of vocational education will be offered through the National Institute of Vocational Education (NIVE) (a project led by the British Council's Skills for Employability and UK colleges Pembrokeshire and Gwent). Consequently, the U.A.E. has acknowledged the great importance of vocational education and identified that for every university graduate the country needs ten people with technical and vocational skills. In turn only then the country will be able to attain a sustainable and diversified knowledge-based economy (Salama, 2015).

### **3.3. POPULATION OF DUBAI AND THE U.A.E.**

In 2013, the total population of the country was 9,346 million (<http://data.worldbank.org/country/united-arab-emirates>) much of this concentrated in Abu Dhabi and Dubai. By 2025, Dubai will double up its current population placing increasing strains on the destination from a number of perspectives, such as the increasing

marginalisation of the local Emirati residents who account for an estimated 10 to 15 per cent of the population ([www.dubaifaqs.com](http://www.dubaifaqs.com)). The development of a predominantly expatriate and migrant labour force shows that there is strong relationship between employment and development plans leading towards the transformation of the U.A.E. into an economic power (Mohamed, 2002). On the other hand, companies are faced with high recruitment costs due to restrictive labour law regulations and according to Al Awad (2010) the administrative as well as recruitment expenses fluctuate between industries and job levels equating to approximately AED 2,674 (£469) per lower level employee.

The main challenge for Dubai and the U.A.E. is to hold their appeal for financiers and expatriate residents, not just as an appealing place to reside and work but as a cost-effective city on which to live. As a result, a long-term concern is that the country will fail to attract permanent residents to sustain its economy (DIFC, 2009). Furthermore, the culture of Dubai has Islamic roots and traditions and even though local people are warm and friendly and there is high tolerance for different social lifestyles still expats residents and tourists must comply with the rules of the land otherwise can face legal consequences (DIFC, 2009).

### **3.4. GROWTH OF TOURISM IN DUBAI, U.A.E.**

Tourism can be of crucial importance to countries as it can generate substantial revenues, employment, supports communities, and assists in preserving and developing national assets (Department for Communities and Local Government, U.K., 2006). In accordance with a recent study by the Dubai Chamber of Commerce, the country's tourism sector predicts 6.5 per cent of annual growth between 2011 and 2021 (Dubai Chamber of Commerce based on BMI, U.A.E., 2012) which is above the average global tourism increase of four per cent per annum. The tourism sector in the U.A.E. consists of tourism hospitality services (mainly hotels and restaurants), tourism transportation (mainly airlines, airports and related travel services), and tourism infrastructure (shopping malls, shopping festivals, golf-course and sports infrastructure for events like cricket, racing and football) (BMI, Q1, 2012). A world-class tourism industry with key events such as the Dubai Air Show (the world's third largest aerospace exhibition); the Dubai World Cup (the world's richest horse race); and the Dubai Shopping Festival which in 2006, registered 3.3 million participants and saw an overall expenditure of US\$ 1.82 billion amongst others attracting tourists to Dubai all year round (DIFC, 2009). U.A.E.'s tourism sector has revealed high growth over the past years and has

strongly contributed in promoting the country as a world tourism hub (Dubai Chamber of Commerce, 2011) and been voted as the most lavish destination in the Middle East (Arabian Travel Market, 2014). Nevertheless, a number of concerns can affect the number of tourists' arrivals to the country such as the instability of neighboring countries, increased risk of terrorist attacks against expats and foreign tourists, and fluctuations of oil prices which can cause a drop in investment (BMI, Q3, 2014).

The growth in tourism has given rise to a significant number of new projects aimed at providing additional infrastructure for the city and entertaining the tourist. These include growing the Madinat Jumeirah tourist zone into the Burj al Arab areas at an estimated cost of AED 2.5 billion (£447,522,641), the Dubai Creek extension costing AED 2 billion (£357,793,440) and the Dubai Tram Project which was completed at the end of 2014 at an estimated cost of AED 3.18 million (£536,690,000). In addition, Dubai International opened its A380 concourse and a second airport, Al Makhtoum International at Dubai World Central opened in 2013 with a potential capacity of 160 million passengers. Even more hosting Expo 2020, the development of an adventure studio theme park with a projected investment of USD\$ 600 billion (£394,320,474,000) and the Dubai Art Museum as future projects aiming to increase tourists' arrivals and receipts in the emirates of Dubai (BMI, Q1, 2014). Moreover, Dubai's hotel sector comprises of Luxury, Upscale, Mid-Market, and Budget hotels catering towards all different segments of travellers (Alpen Capital, 2011). Despite the economic recession in 2008, where Dubai concentrated on settling debts and decreasing government expenditure (Picenoni & Choufany, 2012), luxury hotels are been developed with properties. Hotel properties such as Waldorf Astoria opening a 319-luxury room hotel on The Palm Jumeirah in March of 2014 and the Four Seasons Hotel and Resorts and Taj Hotels, Resorts and Palaces opening a property respectively in quarter four of 2014 (BMI, Q1, 2015). In line with the Hotelier MiddleEast upcoming properties database, the forecasted numbers accounts for 154 new projects bringing Saudi Arabia top of the list, followed by 99 new hotel projects in the U.A.E. and Oman with 22 new projects in the pipeline (<http://www.hoteliermiddleeast.com/hotelierprojects/>).

Henderson (2006, p.96) stated that: *"in the area of accommodation there have been criticisms of hotel overbuilding and dependence on supply-induced demand"*. The oversupply in the number of hotel rooms is another issue of concern. During the economic downturn and in accordance with the Hotelier Middle East upcoming projects database, after a comparison

of projected openings saw an average delay between 2-3 years affecting U.A.E.'s hotel growth with many projects being either cancelled or put on hold due to lack of investors (Choufany, 2011). Even though, there are 77 hotel properties in Dubai which belong to the five star rating showing their strong presence within the luxury hotel sector (Dubai Statistics Center, 2015).

Furthermore, Dubai attracts a diverse international clientele, and in 2013 the expected market sources showed continuous strength and were primarily from Saudi Arabia, India U.K., U.S.A., Russia, Kuwait, Germany, Oman, China and Iran placing Dubai as a hub for global travellers (BMI, Q3, 2014).

### **3.5. TOURISM EMPLOYMENT IN DUBAI, U.A.E.**

Industry officials in 2008 identified that low staff retention and migration of skilled employees, would mean that the country would require approximately half a million new employees to sustain its hotel workforce needs within the next five years (Manpower, 2008). On the back of the successful bid to win EXPO2020, the growth of the hospitality and tourism industry has escalated as the city develops its infrastructure to support this mega event. By 2020 Dubai's Tourism Vision 2020 plan intends to welcome over 20 million tourists and produce AED 300 billion in tourism revenues (BMI, Q3, 2014). Employment opportunities in the sector will be further enhanced with the EXPO creating an additional 277,000 jobs, of which 40 per cent will be tourism and hospitality. The Dubai Department of Tourism and Commerce (DTCM) is continuing the human resource development of front-line employees aiming at the enhancement of professional skills, work efficiency levels, and keeping labour force morale high by offering training programmes for service employees. However, talent management is a major concern since a third of hotel revenues are spent in payroll expenses with turnover rates as high as 31 per cent. High employee turnover within the GCC region is constantly on the strategic agenda of hotel executives with the main goal being to increase retention levels and remuneration of employees (Alpen Capital, 2011).

The Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) membership statistics highlighted that 73 per cent of employment in Dubai hotels and restaurants sector is generated by large size businesses with 100 plus employees; 23 per cent by medium sized businesses with ten to 99 employees; and four per cent by small sized businesses with less than ten employees. On

average, there were about 57 employees per business unit (DCCI Membership Database, April 2005).

### **3.5.1. Labour demographics.**

In general, the growth of Dubai has been supported by the creation of a labour force that is made up of high numbers of expatriates at senior management level, and immigrant labour from the Indian subcontinent at the lower level (Forstenlechner & Mellahi, 2010). While there may be a number of benefits associated with the development of a largely imported workforce, including the option to control labour costs, which are not inflationary, and to replace the workforce as and when required, concerns have been expressed. These concerns are associated with the heavy dependence on qualified expatriate labour with an estimate of 98 per cent of private-sector employees represented by non-Emiratis (BMI, Q4 2012). In the U.A.E. the national population is not only in the minority, but are also physically unable to occupy the required infrastructure and lack the necessary technical, customer service, accounting skills too with over 90 per cent of foreigners holding in general private-sector jobs (De Boer & Turner, 2007).

In 2004, Strauss highlighted that in the hotel sector around 80 per cent of the labour force was made up of expatriates and migrants. Since then, little has changed despite developments such as the Emiratisation programme of main hotel companies and DTCM initiatives to increase the Emirati workforce by 15 per cent a year until 2020. In 2014, it was estimated that within the hundreds of thousands of people employed in the sector, an estimated 3,160 are Emiratis (Sahoo, 2014). The fundamental problem of moving forward will be that the expansion of the hotel industry is so rapid that it is unlikely that the Emirati workforce will be able to keep up, even if increasing numbers of locals see hospitality as a valuable career choice. The Dubai government has also voiced concerns in recent years over the number of unskilled workers entering the country, which is an outcome of labour exchange agreements signed with in 2006. The purpose of these agreements was to allow potential job seekers to obtain work in the U.A.E. only through recruitment offices accredited by the Ministry of Labour, in order to restrict incoming unskilled workforce and use employee screening mechanisms (Issa, 2006).

The problem with an unskilled workforce reflects directly on the productivity levels and as per the economic survey conducted by the Dubai Municipality (2003), labour is more productive in other sectors such as insurance, manufacturing, trade, real estates and banking



in comparison to the hospitality and tourism industry. Moreover, transportation, construction, and hotels are sectors with below the average labour productivity of Dubai's economy. Consequently, productivity of skilled workers is higher than that of unskilled level workers. Given the skill set needed to become an effective hospitality employee and particularly the requirement for fluency in English (Parmar, 2011) the demand for front-line employees in the hotel industry is high.

Nevertheless, another major concern it is that labourers working in the construction sector as well as domestic helpers have been low-paid, exploited, abused, and still left out from rules that apply to employees in other sectors such as the hotel. Main violations refer holding back and delaying wages as well as benefits from workers, failing to pay back recruiting expenses, repossessing worker passports, and housing workers in inferior accommodation. Unfortunately, domestic helpers have complained about physical abuses and maltreatment from employers such as confining them in the houses they work for, not been given breaks or day offs, failing to pay them full salaries and denying them proper food, poor living conditions or medical care. In extreme cases, there have been incidents of forced labour, slavery as well as human trafficking (Human Rights Report, 2015).

### **3.5.2. Salary ranges of hospitality front-line employees in Dubai, U.A.E.**

Determination of wages generally depends on the level of education and learning which are considered as investments in human beings (Nerdrum and Erikson, 2001). In the U.A.E., salaries can vary even more depending on factors such as nationality, qualification, negotiation skills, and gender (Zachariah, Prakash, IrudayaRajan, 2002). In contrast to several other nations, Dubai has no minimum wage rates or standardized salaries and high salary differences exist between U.A.E. Nationals and expats and labour migrants. For instance, an Emirati average monthly income corresponds to AED 26,000 (£4,561) whereas for a non-Emirati the average monthly income equates to AED 5,500 (£964) (Labour Force Survey, 2011b). Shedding more light on the issue, Vijay Gandhi, (Hay Group's Director of Reward Information Services) stated that: *“Our data shows that Emiratis are paid 33 per cent more fixed pay than the general market. The biggest gap between nationals and non-nationals is for entry level positions where demographics of the country indicate young Emirati talent is limited”* (Dhal, 2011). Arnold (2011) also observes that one of the biggest challenges to the GCC region in the next ten years will be to create jobs for nationals.

Despite the gender imbalance of 2.2 sex ratio of male/female of the total population, employee nationality also influences salaries and looking at the following five distinct groups, the first group can earn between 2-3 times more than the lowest paid nationalities for the same type of job. However, some fluctuations can be found between groups 3 and 4 <http://www.dubaifaqs.com/salaries-dubai.php>

1. Westerners (Europe, North America, Australasia) and GCC Arabs will be paid the most
2. Japan, South Korea, and Singapore nationals are paid similar to Westerners
3. South Africa, Eastern Europe, Russia, Taiwan, Central and South America and non-GCC Arabs
4. Philippines, Thailand, China and other Asian countries but not sub-continent, and non-GCC Arabs
5. India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, China, Africa

In the hospitality industry, according the Middle East Salary Survey (2012), 81.4 per cent of respondents agreed that salaries for hospitality line staff were minimal. Just under half, 46 per cent of respondents stated that salaries should be raised, whereas 35 per cent believed that salaries should remain the same because of the amount of training provided by employers and career development opportunities in the area (Clarey, 2012).

A recent survey within the service sector showed that 13,186 employees earned less than AED 1,000 (£175), 33,989 employees earned between AED 1000-2999 (£175-526), 5,317 employees earned AED 3,000-5,999 (£526-1052), and 2,116 employees earned AED 6,000-9999 (£1052-1754). Above AED 10,000 (£1754) employees were in the hundreds with the only exception of the highest earners who accounted for 1,293 senior managers with earnings above AED 26,000 (£4561) (Labour Force Survey, 2011).

### **3.6. EMIRATISATION.**

Sectors linked to consumer goods and types of positions such as customer service, sales etc., are available but have a poor reputation amongst Emiratis (Forstenlechner & Mellahi, 2011). This poor reputation among Emiratis has created a lack of motivation and disinterest to join the private sector, which is reinforced by perceptions of low salaries, lack of job security, long working hours, and low social image. This has contributed to a preference for employment in the public sector even though; the government has raised the cost of

employing the expatriate workforce in order to attract more U.A.E. Nationals into the private sector (BMI, Q4 2012). It is been suggested that the private sector should be made similarly attractive to nationals and foreigners by reducing benefits in the public sector and that private companies have failed to take initiatives towards the employment of nationals, hence creating negative stereotype of nationals (Forstenlechner, 2010).

Human Resources consultancies said that near 50 per cent of companies in the U.A.E. expect to hire more local talent in future. Dr. Jasim Al Ali, (Director of Human Resources at the Department of Economic Development in Dubai) suggested that the private sector should occupy more Emiratis and stated that: *"We have around 76,000 Emiratis working for the Dubai Government departments ...while there will always be room for more, the private sector must also take them on board."* (Dhal, 2011 retrieved from <http://gulfnews.com/business/sectors/employment/good-times-are-back-change-your-job-now-1.908499>). However, there is an objection from U.A.E. Nationals to join the private sector due to long working hours and low pay and on the other hand, employers find that U.A.E. Nationals are lacking experience, skills, motivation, and qualifications (Wilkins, 2001). As an example, in 2006, the government supplemented the Emiratisation requirements by regulating that all secretaries and public relations officers should be Emiratis (BMI, Q4 2012).

According to Al-Lamki (1998), government officials had identified that their dependence on an expatriate workforce could have serious long-term political, economic, and social consequences and subsequent localisation strategies across the Middle East are been introduced in order to encourage and support the employment of nationals. For instance, Omanization, Saudization, Emiratisation, Bahrainization, Kuwaitization, and Qatarization are titles given to these localisation strategies in Oman, Saudi Arabia, the U.A.E., Bahrain, Kuwait, and Qatar respectively (Randeree, 2012). These strategies offer guidelines and enforcement of the private and public sector aspects of employment practices including recruitment and selection, education and training, career management, and the creation and implementation of reward systems (Rees, Mamman, & Bin Braik, 2007). Dale (2004) as cited in Rees *et al.* (2007) defined Emiratisation as *"the recruitment and development of U.A.E. Nationals to increase their employability, thus reducing the country's dependency on expatriate workforce"*. These localisation strategies were linked to factors such competitiveness, globalization, economic growth, as well as social reform (Looney, 2004).

However, no agreed guidelines have been enforced other than the commitment to Emiratisation through leadership and execution of policies and processes within organisations to support localisation (Latham & Watkins, 2011). Challenges faced by Human Resources Management functions in GCC countries, where the encouragement of nationalization is evident are closely linked to the active participation of nationals in the country's economy; the increase of competency levels amongst nationals; and the provision of a good work environment which enables nationals to identify and utilize their full potential (Randeree, 2012).

In order to enforce this commitment from employers the government has introduced centrally identified employment quotas for nationals within particular sectors in line with the Cabinet Resolution Number 26. The Emiratisation policy quotas are higher in the public sector, and have recently been amended for the private sector to create a blanket 15 per cent quota of U.A.E. national workers, through all private sector industries (Latham & Watkins, 2011). Organisations that fail to adhere to the Emiratisation policy may face charges between AED 15,000 to AED 20,000 (£2631 to £3508) per offence (Qabbani, 2011). The outcome is not necessarily positive with some organisations just employing U.A.E. Nationals to abide by rules, without making use of their full potential and abilities in the workplace (Qabbani, 2011). In line with the Ministry of Labour data, between the 3.8 million employees in the private sector around 20,000 to 30,000 are nationals (Al Haddad, 2011).

Another government initiative is the introduction of 'Emiratisation and Levy Payroll Fees'. Under this initiative each U.A.E. expatriate residents should contribute AED 8.50 (£1.28) monthly to assist the funding of a national human resource development programme designed to train and develop U.A.E. Nationals. There have been exceptions, where employers could make a choice between investing in their recruitment strategies towards nationals and the development of nationals or paying a charge for employing a fully trained and experienced expatriate. In addition, the restriction of work permits issued by the government for expatriate and migrant labour is been implemented across all private sectors (Al Haddad, 2011).

The process of 'Emiratisation' is generally considered to have failed, provoking high costs and inefficiencies that deters private companies from showing full commitment towards this localisation strategy (Rees *et al.*, 2007). Furthermore, the government should focus not only

in the implementation of a quota system but also in the encouragement and training of the private businesses to retain Emiratis (Al Haddad, 2011).

Moreover, the hospitality and tourism sector had one of the poorest records in Emiratisation with only 400 U.A.E. Nationals working in the hospitality sector. Therefore, the objective for each year is to attract 600 U.A.E. Nationals in the hospitality sector, after graduating from the Maharat Programme, which runs for nine weeks (Ezz Al Deen, 2009). Nevertheless the programme has not been successful for the hospitality sector and currently Dubai's DTCM is launching a new programme called 'Tourism Talent Incubator' providing learning opportunities for young Emiratis to obtain a broad experience within the hospitality and tourism sector (<http://gulfnews.com/business/sectors/tourism/dtcm-launches-programme-to-develop-dubai-tourism-1.1499873>).

It is evident, that there is a lack of local workforce and therefore the need to recruit abroad is of a great importance with excessive recruitment; relocation; housing; medical; visas and other related costs. Despite these costs, *"from a business point of view based on cheap expatriate labour and cost minimisation, the majority of private sector enterprises are not prepared to train unskilled and inexperienced nationals and pay them more than the rates paid to foreign workers"* (Wilkins, 2001, p.156). In addition, a common complaint of the private sector employers is that nationals have unrealistic expectations regarding their working conditions and never stay long in their jobs (U.A.E. Yearbook, 2010). Even though nowadays that the mind set of Emiratis joining the private sector is changing but to a very low extent (Achkhaniah, 2015) with unemployment rates dropping to 2.6 per cent in 2013 (Zaman, 2015).

Moreover, Rees *et al.*, (2007) study, supported that in order for Emiratisation to be successful just the high financial investment is insufficient; hence commitment from top managers within the organisations is crucial. Objective measurements need to be reinforced such as quota targets, measuring turnover rates, alongside with softer and qualitative information regarding employees' attitudes towards Emiratisation, and continuation of monitoring results of the localisation strategy within organisations. Another recommendation was the involvement of top management not only through the design and through the implementation stages of Emiratisation initiatives but through the mechanisms put in place, showing full of support and higher management commitment and involvement. A further recommendation related to the resistance towards Emiratisation programmes due to labour costs, social and

cultural perceptions, and managerial control is based on the mistrust amongst nationals and expatriates of the localisation programme and the job-related skills of U.A.E. Nationals and hence techniques should be implemented in regards to change management. Despite organisational efforts to comply with governmental initiatives by having an allocated budget, strategies in place linked to companies' objectives, dedicated Emiratisation department, and strong communication of these strategies throughout the organisations, another challenge is to be able to sustain all those efforts. Therefore, involvement of policy makers must be imposed within specific sectors of society and sectors and a communication awareness campaign should be designed so to convince and convince employers as well as managers of the intrinsic worth and long-term sustainability of Emiratisation (Randeree, 2012; Rees *et al.*, 2007).

Furthermore, the association between the Emirates Nationals Development Programme (ENDP), a fundamental facilitating programme avail to young Emiratis entering the workforce, is demanding from the UAE's job industry to pay more consideration in designing effective training programmes in all sectors. This preventative approach aims to fill the existing gap and it aims to assist the UAE attain its target of Emiratisation as a part of its 2021 Vision (<http://gulfnews.com/opinion/editorials/more-job-specific-training-for-emiratis-necessary-1.1451014>).

### **3.7. CHAPTER SUMMARY.**

Dubai has an established reputation as an international luxury destination with numerous five star hotel properties offering 'Arabian' hospitality to international and national tourists. The growth of the country has been phenomenal in the last 40 years with significant growth in sectors such as construction, real estate, tourism and leisure, healthcare, education taking the place of the diminishing oil and gas industries. Expansion plans and development of a range of new attractions has assisted the increase in receipts from tourists. The direct contribution of travel and tourism to UAE GDP was Dh56.5bn last year, representing 4 per cent of total GDP, estimated the Travel & Tourism Economic Impact 2014 report. The industry was forecast to expand by 4.7 per cent in 2014. The total contribution of the industry to the economy – including wider effects from investment and the supply chain – was Dh117.4bn, or 8.4 per cent of GDP. The growth of the sector's contribution would reach 4.5 per cent this year. Despite the continuing growth of the city, Dubai faces a number of challenges such as

negative reputation of employers towards workers in the construction sector as well as house workers with extreme human rights violations, the heavy dependency on expatriates and migrant labour. In addition, these challenges reflect the increase in unemployment rates, educational systems which are in need of further improvement, inadequate gender balance in the workforce, low levels of Emiratis joining the private sector and a governmental localisation strategy which needs to be implemented with more rigorous controls and reporting measurements.

## **CHAPTER FOUR – METHODOLOGY.**

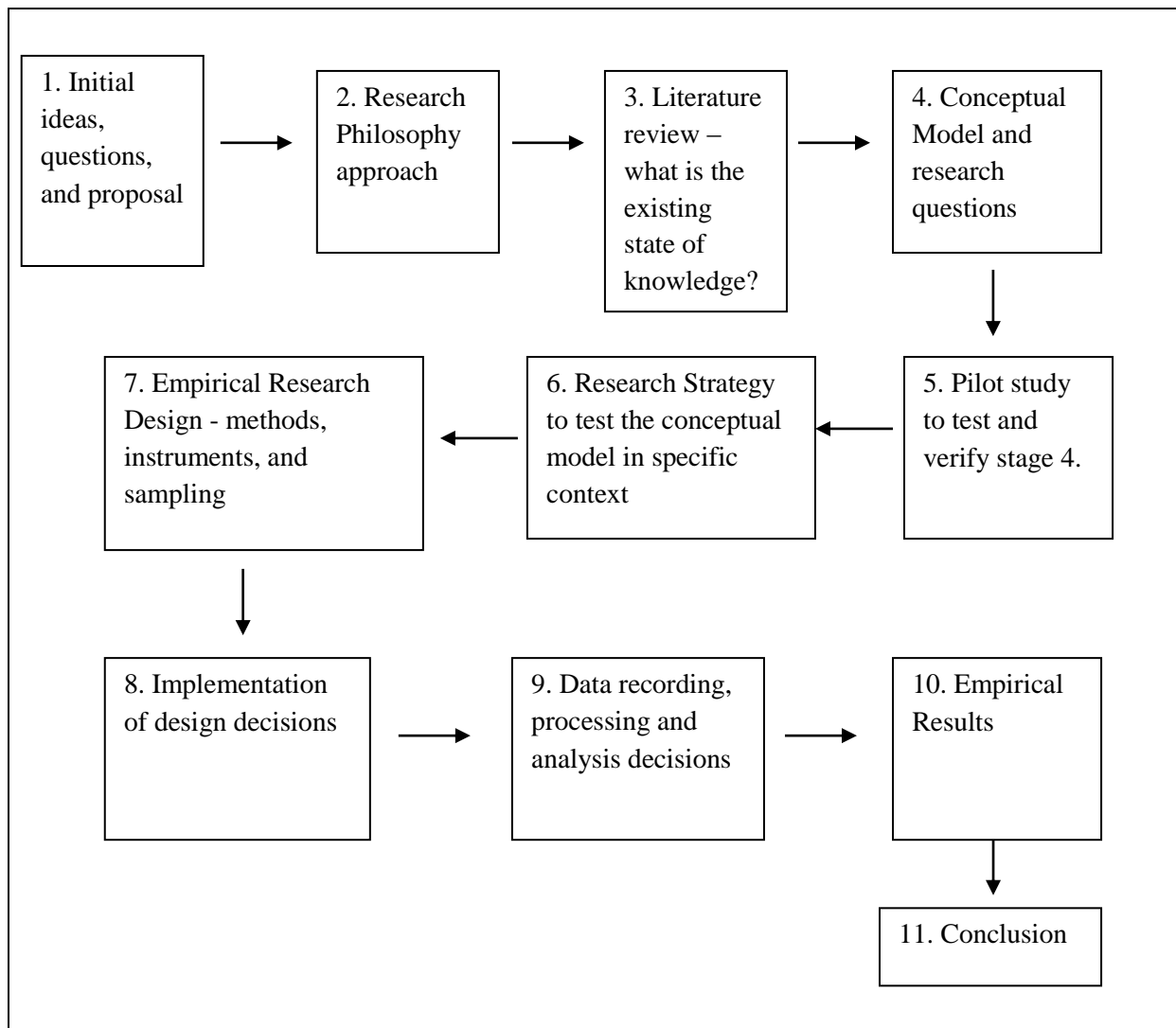
### **4.1. INTRODUCTION.**

This chapter establishes the research philosophy, design, and methods used in the study. Chapter 4 will follow a logical sequence starting with the discussion of the limitations and difficulties encountered by the research. Then the theoretical reasoning of the mixed research methodology will be explained in order to provide a clear understanding of the research instruments and an explanation of the empirical research will be discussed. Hence, the next part of this chapter will provide the reader information relevant to the research instruments and then the composition of the samples. This will be followed by the description of the research instruments including the semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations and the questionnaire. The next step will continue to explain the forms of analysis and finally the chapter will conclude with some suggestions on the research design and on the sample.

Hence, the conceptual map, illustrated in figure 4.1 below, was developed to describe the steps of the research methodology for this study.



**Figure 4.1: Conceptual Map.**



## **4.2. THE RESEARCH PROCESS.**

The research questions developed out of the general case of HCI- hospitality relationship and took its definite form through the application in the specific context of Dubai, U.A.E. In this regard, the starting point was the general view of hospitality as being not only a useful source of employment but also an industry, which can accommodate a diverse workforce, which is in need of human capital interventions. From this concept evolved the proposition that the role of hospitality may be expanded further by looking into the labour markets, the role of HCI, and its importance to the organisation as well as its front-line employees.

What follows now is the description of the sequence of phases, which lead to the finalisation of the research questions, and to the design of the research instruments. The sequence was as follow:

- i. Development of the research question from within the general question of the role of HCI in hospitality industry.
- ii. Review of appropriate literature leading to the:
  - Identification of HCI and all associated components including:
    - Training, learning and development,
    - Perceptions of and attitudes to training within the hospitality industry,
    - Benefits of training to front-line hospitality employees,
    - Benefits of training to the organisation,
    - ROI measures.
  - Identification of the role of tourism and hospitality in the emirate of Dubai, U.A.E. including:
    - An overview of the country's profile and particularly the emirate of Dubai in regard to its political, financial, educational and population estimates.
    - Growth of the tourism and hospitality industry.
    - Employment opportunities due to the expansion of tourism and hospitality industry.
    - Local governmental initiatives associated with the localisation strategy known as "Emiratisation".
- iii. Definition of aims.
- iv. Definition of concepts and variables.
- v. Decision on data collection techniques.
- vi. Decision on data analysis techniques.

#### **4.2.1. Justification of the location for this study.**

Globally, the hospitality and tourism industry is a key employer of individuals with different backgrounds, age bands, race, religions, educational attainment, and cultures. Because of this immense employment diversification, hospitality organisations invest a substantial amount of money in training interventions to benefit organisations and workforce. As a result, the emirate of Dubai in U.A.E. has been chosen as the locale of the research for the following reasons:

- i. Dubai is an emirate well known worldwide for its superior delivery of luxurious hospitality and tourism related products and services.
- ii. Dubai has a significant hospitality industry and recognition not only within the MENA region but internationally too.
- iii. Dubai has a strong presence of five star hotel properties with high employee-guest ratios ensuring high quality and service delivery.
- iv. There is a heavy dependence on expatriates and labour migrants in the private sector.
- v. Hardly any research has been conducted into the HCI of five star hotels for front-line employees in Dubai.
- vi. Hospitality and tourism is an important economic indicator for the country and its further growth as an active sector participating in the Gross Domestic Product.
- vii. The fact that the researcher resides in the emirate of Dubai provided a particular interest in the study.

#### **4.3. RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY.**

The type of this research is applied research since it is focused on developing new knowledge in the area of training, learning, and development of front-line employees in five star hotels in Dubai, U.A.E. This research followed a positivist, exploratory design.

Positivist research “*strives to achieve the aims so to explore, explain, evaluate, predict, and develop/test theories*” (Sarantakos, 2005, p.11). An exploratory design begins with the primary qualitative phase, followed by the validation of the findings, which in turn informed the quantitative phase of the study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Hence, the qualitative phase identifies crucial factors, whilst the quantitative phase applies them to a larger and

more diverse sample (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). A positivist philosophy for this study was adopted to provide a framework for the research, in which management perceptions were studied to explain and explore the organisational efforts and commitment to HCI for front-line employees and ROI. Observations were also used to evaluate the actual training interventions offered to front-line employees in five-star hotels. Finally, front-line employees were asked to complete a survey in relation to HCI provided to them by their organisation.

A mainly but not exclusive deductive approach has been adapted to this study since the researcher read existing literature on HC Theory, HCI, HC Interventions, and HC Management. Based on past studies the researcher developed a conceptual framework that provided a structure and guide for the research. The deductive approach, according to Brotherton, (2008, p.18) is described as: *“highly structured, focused, and constrained”* in regards to data collection and analysis procedures and consequently only the data required are collected.

#### **4.3.1. Justification of mixed methods research.**

Mixed methods research is defined as: *“a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases in the research process”* (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p.5).

Mixed methods is a strong approach due to its combination of data, since with this design *“words, pictures, and narrative can be used to add meaning to numbers”* (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 21). Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) suggested that the value of mixed methods is superior for numerous reasons. Firstly, quantitative research on its own is weak in understanding the context or the setting in which people talk, since the voices of participants are not clearly expressed. Personal input and interpretations of quantitative researchers are hardly ever examined and hence qualitative research fills in these gaps. However, qualitative research is also perceived as incomplete because of the inclusion of researchers' interpretations, resulting in a high level of subjective and biased explanations and the complexity of generalizing findings due to small samples. Secondly, mixed methods research provides a more thorough support for examining a research problem instead of quantitative or qualitative research on its own. Thirdly, a number of questions answered by different sample populations can be used in mixed methods research to arrive at a more

general picture and so to identify resources that are more useful. Fourthly, mixed methods allow researchers to have a more collaborative relationship between the two methods instead of a confrontational relationship and therefore this study connected the qualitative data followed by the quantitative data to draw the results. Another advantage is that through mixed methods the interpretation of the relationship between different variables can be established through the quantitative data whereas with the use of qualitative data, an explanation can be derived as to why such relationships occur (Anderson, 2009). Hence, the researcher of this study decided to use mixed methods rather than to restrict the data collection with just one method. This study adopted a mixed methods approach and involved gathering and analysing information from: semi-structured interviews with managers, observations of training programmes offered to front-line employees, and surveys completed by front-line employees within five star hotels in Dubai.

Furthermore, De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, and Delport (2002, p.365), suggested that: *“the concept of triangulation is sometimes used to designate a conscious combination of qualitative and quantitative methodology”*. Triangulation is used to *“describe the process whereby data from different sources are used to examine the findings”* (Anderson, 2009, p.139). Therefore, the researcher looked for a merging of the data collected with the use of qualitative and quantitative methods in this study to enhance the credibility of the findings. Designing multi-method research depends on the potential for enrichment of the validity of the study findings. Triangulation eventually reinforces and supplements a study's conclusions, making them more suitable to supporters of both qualitative and quantitative methods. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) mixing data from both methods can occur in three ways: merging the two datasets by actually bringing them together, connecting the two datasets by having one build on the other, and embedding one dataset with the other so that one type of data provides a supportive role for the other dataset. For this study, connecting the data was used by collecting and analysing first the qualitative data to build the quantitative instrument. Consequently, it was followed by the collection and analysis of the quantitative data in order to merge the results.

#### **4.3.2. Limitations faced by the researcher.**

While the area of HCI for front-line employees is an interesting topic for research, the location in which the study was conducted presented a number of limitations. Being in the Middle East region, the researcher was faced with challenges. These challenges related to the

accessibility to a hotel company's information, the fear of sharing information outside the hotel companies, the change of management of two hotels which restricted the collection of qualitative data in Phase 2, the insufficient secondary information related to HCI in the hospitality industry in the U.A.E. and more specifically in the emirate of Dubai, and the lack of updated and translated information from Arabic into English primarily referring to statistical information and governmental reports. Consequently, the researcher had to come up carefully with alternative solutions to ensure that the study could be conducted in full, despite these obstacles. Bearing in mind the fact that the researcher is employed by an entity, which belongs to one of the major hotel companies in the U.A.E., it was extremely hard to be granted access from two major hotel companies. On two different occasions' operational managers of different hotels granted access but headquarters later on declined access, since it was against company policy to share in-house information with outsiders. Therefore, this study resulted in using one hotel company, which had, at the time, seven hotels located in Dubai; U.A.E. Out of the seven hotels, the researcher was granted full access to six hotels out of the seven. Another limitation was the change of management of two of the six hotels, therefore the researcher was only able to carry out Phase 1 of the research linked to the qualitative data collection on the two hotels, which changed management but could not proceed further with Phase 2 linked to the qualitative data collection on those two hotels. Finally, after reading and carefully analysing the HCI literature it was found that not a single article existed in this topic area within the context of Dubai's five star hotel sector. Consequently, making it challenging but at the same time even more interesting, since this study will be the first one of its nature looking into the training, learning and development of front-line non managerial employees in five star hotels in Dubai, U.A.E.

#### **4.4. RESEARCH APPROACH**

##### **4.4.1. Secondary Data Collection: The literature review**

The main purpose of reviewing the existing literature on HCI of front-line employees in the hospitality industry is to demonstrate that this study showed an in-depth understanding and knowledge related to the topic of this research and that through the existing literature it helped to design the research approach, research instrument, and build upon the present study. The literature review concentrated on three major areas which were: (1) hospitality and tourism employment, (2) HC theory and training in the hospitality industry, and (3) importance of the hospitality industry in the emirate of Dubai, U.A.E. Therefore, two aims were associated with the review of the literature. Firstly, the study is interested in establishing

the importance of human capital investment for front line employees in the hospitality sector and secondly, in examining the current human capital needs for employees in the hospitality sector in Dubai (U.A.E.).

The fundamental task of the literature review was to gather information on hospitality and tourism employment, the composition of the workforce and the skills and competencies needed from front-line employees. Because of its workforce diversity, the role of HC is extremely important based on numerous studies. The need for training interventions was found to be critical for the success of the organisation as well as for the individuals. The delivery of these training interventions relied on a number of training techniques and methods involved. Nevertheless, organisational support, management support, and transfer of training were all identified as key components for a positive impact on training intervention. Therefore, different factors dependent on HCI and training were explained leading to the need for appropriate measurements of the training evaluation, consequently referred to as ROI. The second part of the literature looked closely at the situation in the emirate of Dubai, U.A.E. and provided an overview of the hospitality industry concerned with the economic and tourism development, employment and earnings.

The review of the literature was conducted using secondary literature sources and offered a framework for the entire research process. Secondary resources include all the information that has been already collected by another person or an organisation for their specific purposes of studies and it can be used for another study since it is publicised and in disposition to the world (Brotherton, 2008). This type of information is obtained through newspapers, books, and articles in refereed academic journals, professional journals, magazines, governmental reports, conference proceedings, and company reports. For instance, this study used textbooks to retrieve information mainly in the areas of training, HCI, and research methods. In order to conduct the literature search, the use of parameters seemed adequate to obtain more relevant and clear results about the search. Parameters used refer to language of publication (e.g. English), subject area (e.g. training), business sector (e.g. hospitality/tourism), geographical area (e.g. Middle East), publication period (e.g. last 10 years), and literature type (e.g. peer reviewed articles) amongst others.

Next, after reviewing a number of key articles the main keywords relevant to the research were identified and consisted of: human capital theory, human capital investment, training,

training methods, training techniques, benefits of training, return-on-investment, Dubai, luxury hospitality, and Emiratisation.

Search engines and useful databases such as Business Source Premier (EBSCO), Emerald Full Text, Ingenta Connect, Science Direct, Google Scholar, and PsychINFO Athens were used to assist with the search of relevant articles. Other Internet sources used included specialist HR electronic gateways such as Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, and international HRM sites such as American Society for Human Resource Management and American Society for Training and Development. In addition, media sources such as the National, and Gulf News newspapers, HRM practitioner journals such as People Management, and government sources such as national statistics and labour market figures from the Dubai Statistics Centre, the DTCM, and the DCCI were also collected and read.

Once all the relevant articles were retrieved and read they were then filtered and categorized according to Andersons' (2009) recommendations. Therefore, the first filter referred to the level of importance of each article, consequently they were categorised as: i-very interesting and relevant, ii- interesting but not very relevant, iii-vital, iv-not useful at all. In addition, categories were established based on the topic of each article by using the keywords as a second filter, and lastly the articles were then further sub-categorised based on sub-themes. However, it has to be noted that secondary research was conducted continuously throughout the study up to July 2012 and since then only new publications referring to Dubai, U.A.E. have been included on this study. This means that the researcher read and used the existing literature to develop the model and design the instruments with published work up to 2010, and then a second literature search was conducted to obtain more recent publications, which were used in the update of the literature review chapters.

#### **4.4.2. Limitations of secondary data research.**

During the literature review a number of challenges were faced. It was identified that a number of articles were outside of the initial publication parameter since no further studies have been conducted in the topic area of training in hotels, and therefore it resulted in the use of those studies dated in the late'90s. In addition, because the researcher is based in Dubai, U.A.E., access to the latest editions of textbooks was very difficult to obtain resulting in previous editions being used rather than the latest ones. Nevertheless, heavy use of electronic resources was made through the E-library resources availed by MMU. Another limitation encountered was the lack of governmental reports translated from Arabic into English and



therefore use of sites providing country-specific information was limited to international reports such as the CIA World Factbook and Business Monitor International reports.

#### **4.4.3. Revision of research problem and formulation of research aims.**

The final set of the research aims was refined after the review of the literature. Five themes were particularly influential on the line of thought and as such proved to play a crucial role in the process leading to the final research aims.

The role of HCI in any hospitality organisation is acknowledged as very important since the hospitality industry relies heavily on people, despite its negative image as an employer. HC theory stresses real-world issues concerning employee resourcing, development and rewards, quantifying the value of people, assessing HR processes, organisational learning, and knowledge management. Therefore, hospitality companies are strongly committed to these issues by investing in HC, aiming to equip individuals with the appropriate knowledge, skills, abilities, and resources. Employee training and development connects strategies, tools, and procedures with the aim of improving the abilities and capabilities of organisational members. Companies often emphasise their diverse workforce and commitment to their staff through their mission statements, acknowledging that employees are their greatest asset, and therefore employees' development and well-being are amongst the company's highest priorities. Nevertheless, other areas also influence HC such as morale, motivation, and long-term development. In order for companies to keep their promises training and development are the wheels influencing human capital and, due to its strategic role, acts as a guide for any type of human capital intervention and investment. Therefore, it was necessary for this research to identify the corporate level of commitment, investment, and value of training and learning for front-line employees.

However, in order to follow corporate guidelines each hotel property had to show the same belief in HCI. This led to the understanding that corporate offices place HC in their executive agenda but hotel properties have to assist by actually offering and delivering these human capital interventions to front-line employees through a range of training programmes. Therefore, this study introduced the concept of 'organisational support towards training'.

In addition, in order for these HC interventions to be successful and ensure a strong corporate culture, management support is crucial. Management determines the quality of training, access to training, participation of front-line employees, sufficient training, and development

opportunities, transfer of training, rewards, and continuous follow up and feedback. Given the importance of management's role, the study would be incomplete without investigating 'management support towards training'.

The training environment and training provision are noted for their association with the quality, the financial investment, and the adequate facilities and services of these training interventions. There is a mutual interdependence whereby the training environment and training provision influence the success of the training programmes device and delivery, and hence the training and learning acquisition of front-line employees. To this end, the study introduced the concept of 'adequacy of training facilities and services'.

The ultimate potential result that companies want to achieve after showing their corporate commitment towards HC, their organisational and management support towards training, and their investment and assessment of the training environment is the fruits of all these efforts. Referring to the benefits resulting from all these HC efforts, systems, and interventions through the amelioration of their workforce and the organisations. Therefore, this study introduced the concept of 'perceived benefits of training'.

The above themes informed the research process and led to the definition of the aims. These were as follows:

**Aim 1:** To establish the importance of human capital investment for front line employees in the hospitality sector.

**Aim 2:** To examine the current human capital needs for employees in the hospitality sector in Dubai (U.A.E.).

**Aim 3:** To consider and evaluate current efforts by hotel training departments to devise and deliver training to front-line employees.

**Aim 4:** To assess employees' views regarding the current investment in human capital and to identify areas for improvement.

**Aim 5:** To develop a training model underlining the importance of HCI and its constructs within five star hotels in Dubai (U.A.E.).

#### **4.4.4. Research questions and defining concepts and variables.**

Since a deductive approach is adopted it has resulted in the development of the conceptual framework (please see model 1- suggested training model, Chapter 2 in section 2.9) which acted as a guide for the empirical part of the research investigation. Consequently, the conceptual framework identified that the heart of this research is the concept of HCI, which will be explored through training associated with four other constructs related to management support towards training, organisational support towards training, adequacy of training environment, and benefits of training. Furthermore, the research questions outlined in Chapter 1 in section 1.3 were developed.

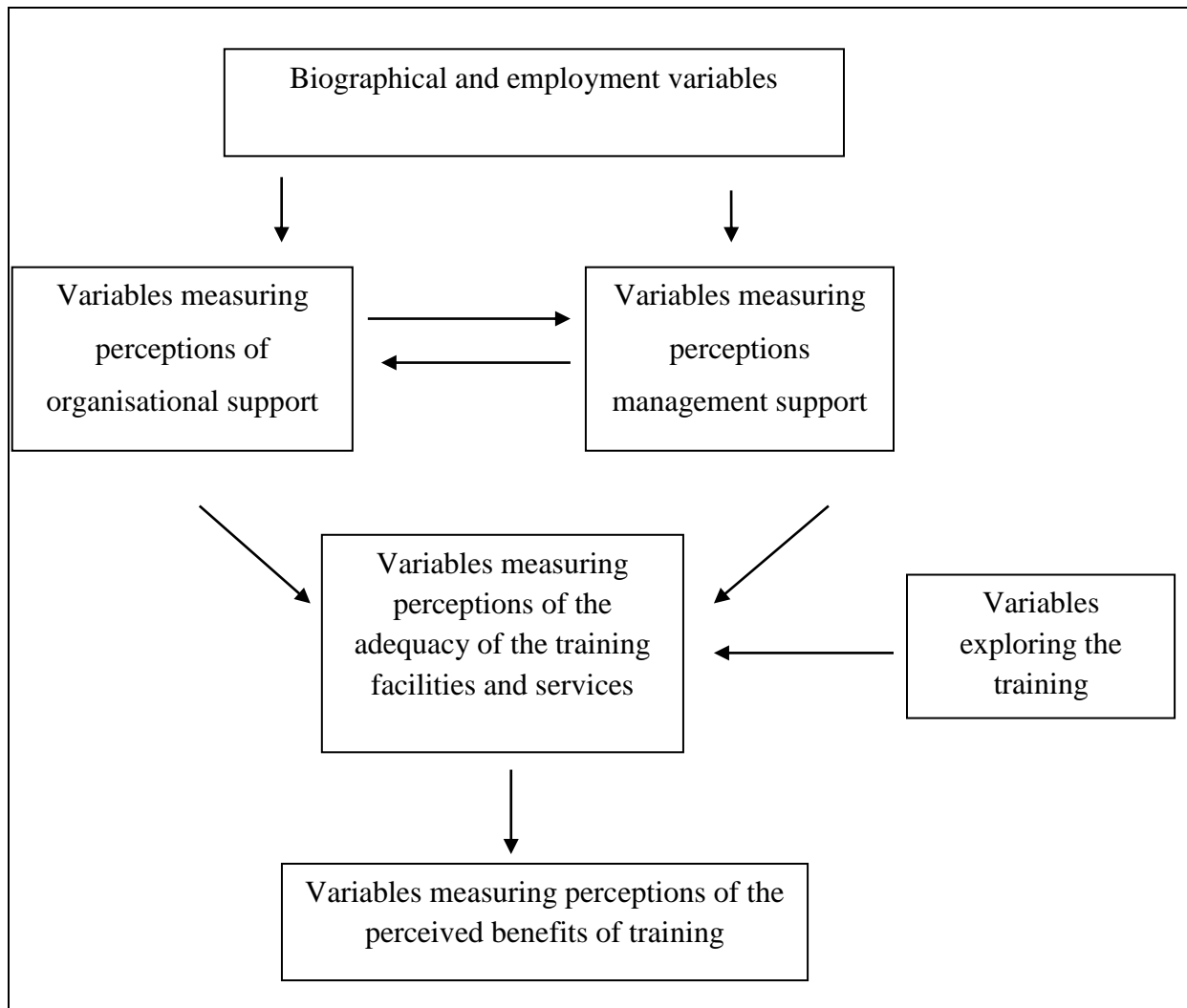
The definition of the above main concept and constructs as illustrated in model 1 lead to the design of the variables to be used on the research instruments. The variables of this study for the quantitative research instrument can be categorised as follows:

- Biographical and Employment Variables, including:  
gender, age, origin, place of work, job position, and service tenure in current job position, earnings, educational qualification, native language and English language skills.
- Variables measuring organisational support towards training: (5 statements)
- Variables measuring management support towards training: (6 statements)
- Variables measuring the adequacy of the training facilities and services: (6 statements)
- Variables measuring the perceived benefits of training: (13 statements)
- Variables exploring the training programmes including:  
training techniques, type of training programmes, length of training, and funding of training.

The following figure illustrates the interrelatedness of the variables. The relationship between these variables is indicated by the direction of the arrows, which are pointed from the independent variables to the dependent variables.

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**Figure 4.2: The interrelatedness of the variables.**



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#### **4.5. PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION: RESEARCH DESIGN.**

According to Bryman (2004, p.27), “a research design provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data”. The choice of research design reveals decisions made about the priority being given to a number of dimensions of the research process. These dimensions could be linked to the importance of expressing fundamental correlations between variables; generalising to larger groups of individuals than the study’s participants, identifying the behaviour and the significance of that behaviour in its specific social context and producing a long-lasting positive reception of social phenomena and their interconnection (Bryman, 2004).

Moreover, the organisation allowed the research to take place by granting access to the researcher so to examine the HCI for front-line employees offered by six different five star hotels located in Dubai, U.A.E.

The primary purpose of this study was to test and support the suggested training model developed from the literature review. Hence, the collection of primary data was divided in two phases: Phase 1 - Qualitative and Phase 2 - Quantitative. Phase 1 data collection was conducted between June and October 2010 and Phase 2 data collection was conducted during August 2011.

#### **4.5.1. Qualitative research methods.**

*“Qualitative research is a mode of inquiry that seeks to emphasize differences in kind over differences in quantity”* (Ruddell, 2011, p.116). The data collected using this method is in the form of words and its purpose is to be able to describe the meanings, preserve context and provide extensive explanation (Ruddell, 2011).

A qualitative research has been adopted for Phase 1 of data collection in order to collect and analyse information that is non-quantitative and consequently this study included semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations.

There are several advantages to using qualitative research methods. An advantage is that this method is actually good at capturing, cataloguing, describing, and preserving events. Another advantage refers to ‘emic’ meaning the insiders’ perspectives and point of views, which is also closely linked to ‘empathetic understanding’ known as *“verstehen”* (Ruddell, 2011, p.116). The understanding of how meaning making is embedded in the local context rather than universal is also important and this method allows unforeseen findings to be provoked resulting in the creation of new theoretical insights (Ruddell, 2011).

The third aim of this study is to consider and evaluate current efforts by hotel training departments to devise and deliver training to front-line employees. Therefore, this qualitative method was chosen to obtain the point of views from Learning and Development Directors in regards to the HCI and training interventions of the hotel units for front-line employees. In addition, the use of non-participant observations from training programmes offered to front-line employees were also used to obtain information regarding the training interventions associated with the training environment, trainer’s role, training content, and behaviours of participants. Hence, a qualitative approach was the most appropriate way to capture the

perceptions from Learning and Development Directors and observe the actual training programmes. The justification of selecting these people and reasoning as what makes them particularly appropriate as sources of information are further explained later in this chapter under the sampling section.

#### **4.5.1.1. Phase I – Interviews.**

An interview is known as verbal questioning and according to Sarantakos (2005) is one of the most popular methods of data collection. Different types of interviews comprise structured interviews, semi-structured interviews and unstructured interviews amongst other typologies (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2007). Semi-structured interviews make use of an interview schedule which is verbally communicated to interviewees, and it usually refers to a series of questions which offers the possibility to the interviewer to vary the sequence of questions, if needed (Sarantakos, 2005) and consequently form part of non-standardised typology (Saunders *et al.*, 2007). All interviews can follow the same sequence of questions but depending on the flow of conversation, the questions can vary. Another possibility is the freedom for additional questions if necessary to explore further the research question and objectives within a particular context. Therefore, since there is no limitations on the answers, no pre-coded answers, and the interview schedule is designed mainly with the use of open-ended questions, the recording of the data tends to be either audio-recorded and with the possible aid of note-taking (Saunders *et al.*, 2007).

The rationale for using a qualitative approach for this phase of the study was through a series of semi-structured exploratory interviews (N=5) and an interview schedule was used to facilitate the process of qualitative data collection. The number of interviews was because every hotel has its own director or manager in charge of the training and learning department. Hence, the interview schedule consisted of seven distinct areas aiming to gather information as:

- To describe the labour workforce composition of the five star hotels.
- To explore the importance and value of training and learning interventions.
- To identify the reasons for training front-line employees.
- To identify the methods and techniques used for the devise and delivery of training programmes.

- To identify the length of training programmes.
- To reveal the cost of training.
- To establish the methods hotels use to evaluate training interventions.

#### **4.5.1.2. Phase I – Observations.**

Structured observation forms part of the qualitative research methods and is a face-to-face encounter in the natural scene with research participants (Ruddell, 2011), defined as “*a technique in which the researcher employs explicitly formulated rules for the observation and recording of behaviour*” (Bryman, 2004, p.167). Different types of observation research include unstructured observation, structured observation, participant observation, non-participant observation, and simple observation and contrived observation (Bryman, 2004) dependant on the levels of observation and participation that can occur (Ruddell, 2011). One of the main advantages of using observations is that it permits behaviours to be observed directly instead of just being dependent on research instruments such as questionnaires to produce such information. Non-participant observation is used to “*describe a situation in which the observer observes but does not participate in what is going on in the social setting*” (Bryman, 2004, p.167). However, critical to any structured observation study is the observation schedule or an observation checklist using field notes in which the categories of behaviour that are observed fall into a coded category. According to Bryman (2004), the use of an observation schedule mainly focuses on two aspects. Firstly, the observer needs to have a clear understanding of whom and for what is to be observed and if any aspects of the setting are to be observed and consequently recorded. Secondly, the research problem needs to be stated so the observer does not lose focus and record unnecessary things. Hence, it is important that the coding system is easy to use and that the observer is familiar with the observation schedule since at times personal interpretations are required as part of the observers’ role (Bryman, 2004).

The rationale for enhancing the qualitative approach for this phase of the study was conducted through non-participant observations (N=8) of training programmes delivered to front-line employees by trainers, and an observation schedule was used to assist the recording of collected information. The number of non-participant observations was based on the number of training programmes delivered to front-line employees, identified through the training calendars of each hotel. The training programmes differ in terms of the length, the

venue, and the training topic/content. The observation schedule was divided into three parts. The first one related to the venue itself, the second part referred to the demographics of participants, and the third part related to the training programme. The purpose of these observations aimed at collecting information regarding the training environment. In order to collect relevant information, the observation schedule looked at recording information pertaining the adequacy of training facilities, the profile and number of participants attending the training programme, the suitability of the content in relation to the training topic area, the length of the training programme, the training aids and techniques used by facilitators to deliver the training programme, the participation levels of trainees, and the ways used to evaluate the training programme. The information collected using non-participant observations was designed to provide a real picture of the training interventions offered and delivered by trainers to front-line employees, and to evaluate the training environment, and training provision.

#### **4.5.2. Quantitative research methods.**

A quantitative research method has been adopted for Phase 2 of data collection in order to collect and analyse empirical data that is quantifiable in nature in order to address the fourth aim of this study, which is to assess employees' views regarding the current investment in human capital and to identify areas for improvement.

Consequently, this study included the use of self-completed questionnaires. Surveys are defined as *"methods of data collection in which information is gathered through oral or written questioning."* (Sarantakos, 2005, p.239). Furthermore, *"written questioning is accomplished through questionnaires, which are administered to respondents by mail or handed to them personally by the researcher in their homes, at work, at school or any other place; they are returned to the researcher after completion"* (Sarantakos, 2005, p.239) known as self-administered or self-completed questionnaires.

Main reason for adopting a quantitative research method for this study is arises from the perception that a quantitative methodology perceives reality to be unbiased, straightforward, and rigid. Another reason is the perception of human beings. Individuals are coherent and directed by social laws; their behaviours one learns through observation and influenced by external causes that yield consistent results. Causes create effects under specific conditions, and predictions can be regulated by the manifestation of such conditions. Another characteristic is the nature of social science meaning that the tool of knowledge extraction is



based on firm rules and procedures and is profoundly distinct from assumption, motive, and common sense. Another feature is that nomothetic meaning is based on universal contributory laws, which affect the sequence of social events and relationships, and it relies on knowledge gained through sense experiences. Lastly, the purpose of social research is to learn and discover, explain and document knowledge of social events and social laws that permit society to regulate events and to forecast their occurrence and outcomes (Sarantakos, 2005).

There are several advantages of using quantitative research methods and more specifically self-completed questionnaires. A self-completed questionnaire is cheaper and more efficient to administer to a geographically widespread sample since this instrument can be distributed to a large quantity at the same time and hence produce quicker results. In addition, the absence of an interviewer limits the effect on the answers respondents give and therefore there are less likely to be biased answers. In addition, there is no interviewer variability since self-completed questionnaires are not influenced by the way interviewers ask, sequence, or order the questions. The questionnaires are stable, reliable and a uniform measure, free of deviation. Lastly, self-completed questionnaires ensure anonymity and provide respondents the freedom to respond at their own space and time (Bryman, 2004; Sarantakos, 2005).

#### **4.5.2.1. Phase II – Questionnaires.**

This study used self-completed questionnaires handed out to front-line employees and collected immediately upon completion by the researcher. The choice of self-administered questionnaire was influenced based on the following important factors. Firstly, the characteristics of the respondents from whom the data were collected secondly, the importance of reaching only front-line employees as respondents thirdly, the importance of their responses not being distorted fourthly, the adequate sample of the required analysis in order to achieve an adequate response rate, and lastly, the types and number of questions asked to collect data.

The distribution of the self-completed questionnaire (N=367) will be explained in detail later on this chapter (please see section 4.7.3). The self-completed questionnaire was divided into six parts. This quantitative method was chosen to obtain information about the demographic profile of respondents, their perceptions of the organisational and management support towards training, their opinions in relation to the adequacy of training facilities and services, their points of view associated with benefits as a result of training and finally information

related to the training programmes offered by their employer focusing on the content, training techniques, and funding of training programmes. Hence, a quantitative approach was the most appropriate way to obtain the perceptions of front-line employees in regards to the current HCI provided by their employer.

#### **4.6. SAMPLING.**

*“A sample is a smaller version of the whole it is obtained from that reflects the same characteristics as those of the whole”* (Brotherton, 2008, p.164). The whole is known as the ‘population’ and it is the relationship between the population and the sample that is crucial for inferring valid suggestions from the sample results to the broader population. Hence, the sample must be as identical as possible to the population in regards to its composition and characteristics so to be considered sufficiently ‘representative’ in order to make valid inferences (Brotherton, 2008). Populations do not refer only to people but to particular types of companies, products, processes amongst others. Hence, population is used to *“denote a collection of related elements, all of which share some characteristics relevant to the study”* (Brotherton, 2008, p.165). The composition and size of the sample is crucial for every social research design. The discussion that follows is structured around three major areas: first, the ways of choosing the appropriate sample will be highlighted. Secondly, the determination of the target sample will be explained and thirdly the computation of the sample size will be presented.

##### **4.6.1. Research population.**

As a first attempt, the researcher looked at the internet page of Dubai’s Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM, 2005) hotel database to identify all the five star hotels in Dubai, since location and star rating were the main two initial characteristics that this study embraced at an early stage for its population. Then a list of five-star hotels in Dubai based on the hotel rating classification was compiled resulting in a sample frame of (N=39) hotel units, which guided the researcher to contact the three main hotel companies regionally developed and grown. The researcher at that stage decided not to include international hotel chains operating in Dubai, because their practices are more standardised and these hotels have to follow strict guidelines from their headquarters, which are based outside the U.A.E. In addition, the number of years they are operating internationally gives them an advantage in comparison with the three regional hotel companies. Subjects included in the sample were

selected based upon specific criteria. Therefore, the selected three companies had similar characteristics in order to meet the following criteria and to be included in the sample:

- Location of hotels situated only in the emirate of Dubai for data to be collected
- Luxury products and services
- Five star rating hotels
- Over 100 guestrooms in each property
- Over 100 front-line employees in each property
- Headquarters based in Abu Dhabi or Dubai

In addition, it was noted that all three companies had a strong presence in the Arab market, strong presence in the U.A.E., and provided luxury top-end class products and services to international and national guests.

As previously stated, one of the main limitations faced by the researcher whilst conducting this research related to access to the three pre-selected companies. Firstly, a telephone call was made to two HR managers in two of the selected companies and one Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Human Resources in the third selected company. It was then followed by an e-mail, which was sent to the same individuals to explain the nature of the study, the topic, and the aims, and in addition, an outline of the study was attached for their perusal. The two HR managers agreed to participate however, they had to ask for permission from their headquarters. Unfortunately, the other two companies declined access since their corporate office did not grant access for this study. The COO of the third company agreed right away and a one-hour meeting was then scheduled to explain the scope of this study in more depth. Hence, out of the three companies only one company agreed to participate and committed fully to this study.

#### **4.6.2. Sampling frame.**

The first meeting with the COO took place in their office in the Dubai-based headquarters where the researcher explained in depth the aims of this study. At that stage the COO informed the researcher that out of the seven hotels based in Dubai, access has been granted to six hotels, due to the fact that one hotel temporarily had no Learning and Development Director. After that meeting, the COO kindly sent an e-mail to the Learning and Development

Directors asking to support fully this research by explaining that access has been granted and that their support and collaboration is of great importance. After that initial meeting with the COO, the researcher followed up by sending individual e-mails to the Learning and Development Directors with an attached covering letter explaining the characteristics of the hotels under the sample population and asking a meeting to explain the phases of the research. Five meetings were held with three Learning and Development Directors, one of whom represented two hotels, one Human Resource Director, one Assistant Training Manager at each hotel property. A copy of the interview and the observation schedule was given to them during the meeting. The next step was to arrange the actual date and timings of the interviews and to get access to the training calendars via the company's intranet. The programmes were identified by the researcher and crosschecked with the training team in the hotels to ensure that the level of participants was only operatives and not management. After ensuring that these programmes were targeting front-line employees, the researcher e-mailed the training team to confirm that she will be attending and observing the selected training programmes.

The following table illustrates the sample of the six hotels that were included in this study.

**Table 4.1: Profile of hotel properties and types of data collection phase in each property.**

	<b>Number of Guest Rooms, Suites &amp; Villas</b>	<b>Number of F&amp;B outlets</b>	<b>Phases of Data Collection</b>  <b>1. QUAL: Interviews &amp; observations</b>  <b>2. QUANT: Questionnaire</b>
HOTEL A	292	10	1 (QUAL) & 2 (QUANT)
HOTEL B	202	6	1 (QUAL) & 2 (QUANT)
HOTEL C	617	20	1 (QUAL) & 2 (QUANT)
HOTEL D	292	7	1 (QUAL) & 2 (QUANT)
HOTEL E	113	5	1 (QUAL)
HOTEL F	285	5	1 (QUAL)

#### **4.6.3. Sample selection process.**

Phase 1 of the data collection consisted of qualitative research. In order to collect the qualitative data, a non-probability-purposive sample was used. A few individuals were identified as 'key informants' since they hold specific types of information related to this study. Purposive sampling refers to researchers who select participants for their unique characteristics such as job functions or their experiences, attitudes, or perceptions (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). For the interviews a purposive sample was used because 'key informants', in this case Learning and Development Directors or managers in charge of the Learning and Development functions, have similar job functions and possess specific knowledge with regards to the aims of this study. These key informants have information associated with the HC initiatives the company is undertaking for front-line employees; the value of training and learning interventions; reasons for training front-line employees; methods and techniques mainly used for the delivery of these training interventions; length of training programmes; cost of training; and evaluation of training. Therefore, their insight and opinions assisted the researcher to collect the information required based on their expertise and job function. As a result, four hotel units of the sample frame had a Learning and Development Director, one hotel had a Human Resource Director with a dual role of overseeing both the training and human resources functions and in the other hotel an Assistant Training Manager was in charge of the overall training functions reporting directly to the Human Resource Director.

In addition, purposive sampling was used for the observations since the training programmes were regarded as 'key informants' and were important for this study to enable the researcher to obtain information about the training environment, the demographics of participants, and the content of these training programmes. Training programmes were observed in each hotel property to assess the overall training environment by identifying the different programmes delivered, the training content, the techniques used to deliver the training content, the participation and engagement by the participants. However, the training programmes varied in regards to length, topic, and location. The parameters set for these observations were:

- The topic of the training programme
- The level of participants

An adequate number of an appropriate range, level, and relevant training programmes were identified from the training calendar for each hotel and advice from the hotel's training team. An average of four to five training programmes were offered to front-line employees on a monthly basis ranging from technical programmes to specific and generic programmes resulting in a possible 20 to 25 training programmes being observed in all hotel properties. Nevertheless, through the training calendars the researcher identified duplication of training programmes delivered amongst these six hotel properties. Therefore, the researcher aimed to observe two training programmes with different topic areas per hotel unit bringing it to an average of ten programmes in total (since two hotels have one common training department and hence one training calendar for both hotel units). Ten programmes were chosen, however two were cancelled due to a limited number of participants. Hence, eight training programmes were observed across the six hotel units.

Phase 2 of data collection consisted of quantitative research. In order to collect the quantitative data a non-probability based sampling was used. Convenience stratified sampling was the technique applied since the researcher had identified front-line employees as 'sample respondents' on the basis of occupation. In addition, another characteristic of this distinct stratum was the department in which the front-line employees were working and hence, only Food and Beverage and Rooms Division departments were included. After looking at the organisational charts of the hotels the researcher identified that, the Rooms Division Department included not only sub-departments such as reception, guest relations and concierge, but butler and transportation too. Therefore, all front-line employees working either in the Food and Beverage Department or Rooms Division Department were identified as the adequate sample respondents of this study. Their views regarding the organisational and management support towards training, their perceptions of the training facilities and services and the training provision, benefits as a result of training, training content, training techniques, length, and funding of training programmes were fundamental to this study.

According Krejcie and Morgan (1970) as cited in Sarantakos (2005) a table was recommended to determine the sample size from a given population. This table needed only the size of population to estimate the sample size. The table computed the sample size based on "*chi-square of 1 for freedom, the population size, the population proportion set at 0.50, and the degree of accuracy set at 0.05 by applying a formula developed by the research division of the National Education (USA) published in 1960*" (Sarantakos, 2005, p.173). The researcher had been informed that the total population of front-line employees in the four

hotels was 1523 people and therefore the suggested sample size based on the table proposed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) as cited in Sarantakos (2005) over 1500 people was 306.

#### **4.6.4. Ethical Considerations.**

Moreover, in order to ensure that the research is conducted in an ethical manner, the researcher provided a consent form to the interviewees at the beginning of each interview. The form explained that participation to the study is voluntarily, that interviewees can withdraw at any stage, that full anonymity and confidentiality will be kept, and contact details of the researcher's Director of Studies were included in case they needed further clarification.

Furthermore, the 'gatekeepers' who were L&D Directors and HR Directors/managers of each hotel granted the researcher access to observe training programmes. Additionally, the trainers were also informed in advance via e-mail by their L&D Director or HR managers that the researcher will be observing their training programme(s) and an email was also sent to the trainers by the researcher to inform them of the date/time of and nature of observation, and to share with them the observational schedule. Prior to the commencement of the training programme the researcher met with the trainers individually, explained again the purpose of the research, and justified why the researcher's presence during the actual training is important. Anonymity and confidentiality were stressed and it was explained that none of the trainers or participants will be identified and that the researcher will be a non-participant in order to avoid any disruptions or influences to the training programme. Moreover, trainers were pleased to be informed face-to-face of the scope of the observation and realised that the participant was not a 'spy' and hence the non-participant observation had no impact on the delivery of the training programmes since the researcher was passively taking notes and no use of audio or video recording took place.

In regards to the ethical consent of the survey, a letter was attached to each survey at the beginning stating the topic of this study, the objective of this study related to the questionnaire, and that participation in the survey is voluntarily, confidential, and anonymous. Furthermore, the details of the researcher as well as the Director of Studies were provided.

In order to facilitate the whole process and show appreciation to the respondents, the researcher conducted a raffle offering prizes ranging from first prize AED 400 (£73), second prize AED 300 (£54), third prize AED 250 (£45), and fourth prize AED 200 (£36). Each

questionnaire had a raffle coupon attached to the first page requiring respondents to write just their employee identification number and telephone number so they can enter the raffle. The raffle elevated the interest of the respondents and it was a valid tool to prevent employees from completing the survey twice and to ensure that each questionnaire was fully answered and usable. The raffle winners were announced in October 2011; the researcher contacted them by phone and e-mailed the HR Directors informing them about the winners by stating just their employee ID number and the winning prizes respectively. When the winners came to collect their prize at the researcher's workplace they had to show their ID card to verify their employee ID number since the survey was conducted anonymously. The prize money was given to them in an envelope and a sign in sheet was used to ensure that all winning prizes had been offered as promised by the researcher.

## **4.7 DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS.**

### **4.7.1. Design of semi-structured, face-to-face interviews.**

In the first phase of this study, an interview schedule was used as the research instrument in order to conduct the semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with directors/managers from the Learning and Development Department or Training Department. The interview schedule was designed based on the literature review and it aimed to collect the appropriate answers to the research questions of this study. It was split into seven sections starting with the more generic questions moving into questions that are more specific. (Please refer to appendix A- interview schedule).

The first section of the interview schedule 'Labour workforce composition' with two questions was used to answer the question:

- How does diversity of the workforce impact training? (linked to questions Q1a and Q1b)

The literature review suggested that diversity of hospitality employees had an influence on training due to employees' educational background, educational qualifications, understanding of the English language, and diversity of cultural and experienced backgrounds and hence recognised as a sensitive issue.

The second section 'Counting the value of training and learning' consisted of eleven questions aimed to answer the following questions:



- Does the organisation have a clear commitment towards HCI? (linked to questions Q2 and Q3).
- How does the organisation associate training with training needs? (linked to questions Q4 , Q5 and Q7).
- What is the impact of training and development on organisations? (linked to questions Q6, Q8, Q9, and Q10).
- Does the organisation invest sufficient money in training and development? (linked to question Q11).
- Does the organisation prioritize training and development? (linked to question Q12)

The third section ‘Reasons for training’ consisted of five questions aimed to answer the following questions:

- What is the impact of employees’ skills development on organisational financial performance? (linked to question Q13).
- For what reasons is training and development initiated within the organisation? (linked to questions Q14, Q15, and Q16).
- What is the impact of recruitment on training? (linked to question Q17).

The fourth section ‘Reasons for training’ consisted of six questions aimed to answer the following questions:

- What are the main training methods and tools used to facilitate training programmes within the organisation? (linked to questions Q18, and Q19).
- Do the training programmes have deficiencies and what actions are taken to improve those deficiencies if any? (linked to questions Q20, and Q21).
- Does the organisation have a dedicated training budget? (linked to question Q22).
- Does the organisation measure the ROI? (linked to question Q23).

The fifth section ‘Length of training’ consisted of three questions aimed to answer the following question:

- What factors determine the length of training programmes provided by the organisation? (linked to questions Q24,Q25 and Q26).

The sixth section ‘Cost of training’ consisted of three questions aimed to answer the following questions:

- How does the organisation identify training expenditures? (linked to question Q27).
- Does the organisation finance on-site and off-site training programmes? (linked to questions Q28 and Q29).

Finally, the seventh section ‘Training Evaluation’ consisted of two questions aimed to answer the following question:

- What measurements are used by the organisation to evaluate training and development as well as trainers/facilitators? (linked to questions Q30 and Q31).

#### **4.7.2. Design of the observational schedule.**

An observational schedule was used in Phase 1 of data collection to assist in the collection of data regarding the training environment of training programmes and behaviours of participants attending these training programmes. Therefore, this observational schedule was divided into three parts (please refer to appendix B-observational schedule). The first part aimed to identify the ‘Venue’. The information collected refers to the location, topic, and conditions of the training room/facility. The second part aimed to establish the ‘Demographics of Participants’. Hence, information recorded referred to participants’ working division, the number of participants attending the training programme, gender breakdown, and origin of participants. The third part aimed to elicit ‘Training Information’. Hence, the length of training programmes; the content of the training programmes; the reason of attending the training programme; provision of specific, generic or technical skills to participants; the training aids used by the facilitator; the training techniques used by the facilitator; the type of information and related activities; the level of engagement by participants; and measurement of training programmes were observed and recorded.

#### **4.7.3. Design and coding of self-administered questionnaires.**

Phase 2 data collection utilized self-completed questionnaires which were divided into six parts (please refer to appendix C – Questionnaire). The questionnaire aimed to answer the fourth aim so to assess employee’s views regarding the current investment in human The

administration of the survey will be discussed in further detail at a later stage of this chapter (please see section 4.8.3).

Section A of the questionnaire included personal factual questions and more specifically the demographic and employment variables of respondents. These are: gender, age, country of origin, place of work, job position and service tenure in current job position, earnings, educational qualification, native language, and level of English proficiency. Questions A1 to A9 were closed questions. Question A10 was a closed question with a horizontal format. The gender of the respondents was asked in order to find out if the industry attracts more male or female employees and it was shown through the breakdown of percentage of respondents within the data set (A1). The coding of the question was (1) male, (2) female.

To overcome asking the age of respondents becoming a sensitive issue, they were asked to tick one of the eight age categories. The categories and coding is as follow: (1) under 20; (2) 20-24; (3) 25-29; (4) 30-34; (5) 35-39; (6) 40-49; (7) 50-59; and (8) 60 years and over (A2). However, during the analysis these categories were found to be too extensive, therefore the data was recorded by merging the above eight categories into four merged aged bands (under 20-24; 25-34; 35-49; and 50 years and over).

The country of origin of respondents was asked in order to find out the composition of the workforce in the hotels and to identify the diversity of the workforce. Ten categories were used (A3 and coded as follow: (1) UAE National; (2) Other Middle Eastern and Arabic speaking countries; (3) Non-Arabic speaking African Countries; (4) Asia Subcontinent; (5) South East Asian countries; (6) Western and Eastern European countries; (7) Central Asia, Russia and CIS countries; (8) Central and S. America; (9) N. America; and (10) Australia and S. Pacific. However, during the analysis two categories 'North America' and 'Australia and South Pacific' were removed since there were no respondents representing these two categories. A comparison was then made between country of origin and gender.

The place of work was also an important variable aimed to identify that all four hotels are actually represented by respondents (A4) and that the hotel exempted from the sample was not represented by any of the respondents. (1) Hotel A; (2) Hotel B; (3) Hotel C; (4) Hotel D. The actual names were given in the questionnaire but in order to ensure anonymity they have been replaced with Hotel A; Hotel B; Hotel C; and Hotel D.

Question A5 asked for the current job position of the respondent. The ten categories given were: (1) Concierge; (2) Bell boy; (3) Guest relations; (4) Receptionist; (5) Waiter; (6) Host; (7) Bartender; (8) Cashier; (9) Trainee, Intern; (10) Other. These ten categories were merged into five categories during analysis: (1) Concierge-bellboy; (2) Guest relations-receptionist; (3) Waiter-Host; (4) Bartender-Cashier; (5) Trainee/Intern-other, due to low responses for each option and then compared to occupation and gender.

Question A6 asked for the service tenure of the respondent. The four categories given were: (1) less than a year; (2) 1-2 years; (3) 3-4 years; (4) 5 years or more. A comparison was made at the phase of analysis including the length of service tenure with gender breakdown.

Question A7 asked for the remuneration of the respondent on a monthly basis excluding benefits and service charges. The six categories given were: (1) less than 1000AED; (2) 1000-1500AED; (3) 1501-2000AED; (4) 2001-2500AED; (5) 2501-3000 AED; (6) more than 3000AED. A comparison was made at the phase of analysis to find out who is paid more and under each salary band.

The respondents were asked whether they had any educational qualification (A8). The hypothesis was that, given the high value attached to educational qualifications by employers in Dubai, a large proportion of respondents would possess some form of official qualification. The eleven categories given were: (1) No qualification; (2) Primary School; (3) Secondary School; (4) Some college credit, but less than 1 year; (5) 1 or more years of college, no degree (incomplete); (6) Higher National Certificate (e.g. HNC); (7) Higher National Diploma (e.g. HND); (8) Bachelor's degree (e.g. BA, BS); (9) Master's degree (e.g. MA, MS, MEng, MBA); (10) Professional degree (e.g. MD, LLB); (11) Doctorate degree (e.g. PhD). At the stage of the analysis these eleven categories were merged into three categories: (1) No education-primary; (2) Secondary-college education; (3) Higher education; and a comparison were made between the educational level and the gender of the respondents.

The respondents were asked in Question A9, which is their native language since the literature, suggested that very few Emiratis enter the hospitality industry, and therefore the workforce composition would be very diverse in the hotels. The fourteen categories provided were: (1) Arabic; (2) English; (3) Filipino; (4) Malay; (5) Hindi; (6) Urdu; (7) German; (8) French; (9) Russian; (10) Italian; (11) Spanish; (12) Mandarin; (13) Burmese; and (14) Other.

And finally, the respondents were asked in Question A10 to identify their level of English proficiency since, hypothetically, English would not be their native language but it is however the commercial language and therefore as the literature suggested, English language skills are extremely important for the delivery of guest services and overall communication. A closed question with a horizontal format was used to measure the respondents' English proficiency based on four dimensions: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The measures were based on 1 being the lowest to 5 being the highest level of proficiency on these four dimensions.

Section B of the questionnaire was concerned with the organisational support towards training. Question B1 presented five statements, each describing a possible effort by the organisation in providing different training methods to its front-line employees. The respondents were asked to state their level of agreement or disagreement regarding their perception of organisational support towards training by using the measures on the 5-point Likert scale: strongly agree=5; agree=4; neutral=3; disagree=2; strongly disagree=1. Each statement was designed to fit with the introductory words: 'My organisation provides its employees with good...'. The statements were designed through a process, which was initially influenced by the learning, and talent development practices organisations implement, starting with the socialization phase referring to induction moving into more specific such as technical/professional skills training, off-the-job training, on-the-job training, and cross training. The range of the scale ranged from the most positive to most negative. It was considered that presenting the respondents with the agreement 'pole' would encourage them to state their agreement, without taking into consideration other possible options.

Section C was concerned with identifying the level of satisfaction with the supervisory and management support towards front-line employees own personal training, learning and development needs. Six statements were included and using the measures on the 5-point Likert scale: very satisfied=5; satisfied=4; neutral=3; dissatisfied=2; very dissatisfied=1. The respondents were asked to state their level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the statements. As suggested by the literature management support is crucial only if there is strong communication between the management and the front-line employees in regards the individual needs, the availability and accessibility of training programmes, follow-up, coaching, and application of training through individual tasks.

Section D was concerned with identifying the level of satisfaction with the adequacy of the training facilities and services offered to front-line employees by the organisation. Six statements were included and using the measures on the 5-point Likert scale: very satisfied=5; satisfied=4; neutral=3; dissatisfied=2; very dissatisfied=1. The respondents were asked to state their level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the quality of training programmes attended the trainer's knowledge and expertise, the training material, the physical working conditions in the training rooms, and the food and beverage services. As suggested by the literature organisations which value and invest in training place a high emphasis on the quality of training, the adequate resources, and the level, knowledge, and professionalism of trainers.

Section E was concerned with identifying the level of agreement associated with perceived benefits of training of front-line employees. As suggested by the literature review the benefits of training reflect on the organisations as well as the front-line employees. However, training is the vehicle that enhances and improves front-line employees' personal qualities and professional skills resulting in benefits to the organisation. The benefits of training of front-line employees can be seen through the positive influence on attitude, increased motivation, improvement of abilities, intellectual agility and innovation, job satisfaction and career growth. As a result, these positive outcomes reflect also positive on organisational performance, increased productivity, profitability and retention, customer satisfaction and positive use of succession planning and talent management. Hence, Question E1 presented thirteen statements, each describing a possible benefit after front-line employees being trained. The respondents were asked to state their level of agreement or disagreement using the measures on the 5-point Likert scale: strongly agree=5; agree=4; neutral=3; disagree=2; strongly disagree=1. Each statement was designed to fit with the introductory words: 'As a result of training....'

Section F was designed to find out information about the actual training programmes front-line employees attended.

Question F1 asked respondents to recall the main purpose of the training programmes attended so to identify which knowledge, skills and abilities were enhanced through the training interventions. A list question with eight categories were given: (1) specific skills; (2) foreign language skills; (3) cultural awareness; (4) customer service skills and positive attitude; (5) product knowledge; (6) interpersonal skills; (7) team working skills; (8) career

awareness. As suggested by the literature these competencies are very important for the profile of front-line employees and are identified as soft, hard, and aesthetic skills so to perform effectively.

Question F2 asked respondents to recall which training techniques the facilitators have used during the training programmes front-line employees have attended. A list question with twelve categories were given: (1) reading assignments / case studies; (2) Field trips; (3) Tutorials; (4) Internet conferences; (5) Scripts; (6) E-learning; (7) Role plays; (8) Lectures; (9) Distance education systems & technologies; (10) Group discussions; (11) Cultural assimilator / coaching; (12) Other. The literature showed that the above mentioned techniques are used but some are more popular than others. Hence, the identification of the most frequently used techniques in the hotels would be shown.

Question F3 asked respondents whether the training programmes form part of their personal development plan.

Question F4 asked respondents the amount of training received on a monthly basis to identify if the training is line with other organisations.

Question F5 asked respondents if they are given opportunities to attend external (off-site) programmes followed by Question F6 that asked respondents to identify who finances the external training programmes. Four categories were given: (1) Self-funded; (2) Employer; (3) Government / local authorities; (4) Other. As suggested by the literature the hospitality industry does not invest in external programmes for front-line employees since the main training intervention is on-the-job training or in-house delivered programmes.

#### **4.7.4. Piloting the survey instruments.**

It is always recommended to conduct a pilot study before administering a self-completed questionnaire or interview with the sample of the study. The main purposes of piloting an instrument is to ensure that the survey questions fit well and that the research instrument functions well emphasizing the validity and reliability of the research instruments (Sarantakos, 2005). Before the piloting phase, all of the instruments were discussed with the supervisory team and changes were made before final approval. The instruments were then piloted with different groups of experts.

The interview was piloted in June 2010 with one Training manager and one HR Director who were interviewed once only during the pilot phase and both of them were excluded from the actual five data collection interviews.

The main advantages of piloting the interview for this survey were identified as:

- Piloting the interview schedule provided the interviewer familiarity using the instrument.
- The way that answers were given by the interviewees showed that there was no repetition of the information collected.
- It also showed that one question was difficult to understand and therefore the interviewer broke it down into two questions to make it clearer.
- It gave a very good indicator on the actual length of the interview.
- And finally questions of the interview schedule were re-shuffled just to improve the questions flow and refine its layout.

The self-completed questionnaire was piloted with 24 respondents from the four hotels in the sample at the end of July 2011 during half a day. The main advantages of piloting the questionnaire were identified as follow:

- The respondents were able to follow the instructions on how to answer the questions.
- The respondents had a clear understanding of the questions asked.
- The completion of each questionnaire took approximately an average of 10 minutes.
- Only one addition was made to the questionnaire after the pilot phase since two respondents asked why Burmese was not given as a category and as a result that category was added to the final questionnaire under question A9.
- No issues were faced in answering the questions by the respondents or during the recording of the data.
- The opportunity to measure the reliability of the questionnaire by using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. The table below illustrates the results of the Cronbach's alpha at the pilot stage of this study.



**Table 4.2: Cronbach's alpha pre-data collection.**

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Number of Variables</b>	<b>Score Range</b>	<b><math>\alpha</math></b>
Organisational support towards training	Likert	5	1 to 5	0.788
Management support towards training	Likert	6	1 to 5	0.932
Adequacy of training facilities	Likert	6	1 to 5	0.865
Perceived benefits of training	Likert	13	1 to 5	0.901

As it is shown above the alpha value which indicates the internal consistency of the variables under each construct showed that the all the values are reliable since the alpha values are above .7 and as suggested by Brotherton (2008) any alpha value above .7 is acceptable and closer to 1 indicates that there is greater reliability and a perfect correlation. Therefore, no further changes had to be made to the questionnaire of this study.

## **4.8. ADMINISTRATION OF THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS.**

### **4.8.1. Demographics of interviewees.**

Five interviews were conducted with three Learning and Development Directors, one HR Director, and one Assistant Training Manager. One interviewee was male and the remaining four were females. One interviewee was from the Subcontinent, one was from North America, two from Western Europe, and one from Northern Europe. Three of the interviews were conducted in their offices and the other two were conducted in the restaurants. All of the interviewees had a working background in the hospitality industry within the U.A.E and outside the U.A.E. The interviews range between one hour to an hour and a half and prior to their commencement permission was asked by the interviewees to record the interviews on a dictaphone to facilitate the transcriptions of the interviews at the analysis stage.

### **4.8.2. Characteristics of training events.**

The eight observations of the training programmes were conducted in the six hotels. The 'Welcome programme' in Hotel A & D was the induction programme the company offers to

all its employees with duration of three days. ‘Developing your career’ in Hotel A & D was also a generic programme to inform employees of ways of uploading their resume in the intranet, looking at vacancies and ensuring that they keep up with their Individual Development Programmes. The length of this programme was three hours. In Hotel B ‘Leading quality standards (LQS)’ was just half an hour to remind employees of the quality standards and it was perceived as a refresher programme to maintain standards. ‘Praise me reloaded’ was a programme to explain the value of appraisal forms and what is expected by the employees prior to their meeting with the managers in regards the annual performance evaluation. The length of this programme was two hours.

The following table illustrates the ‘key informants’ referring to the managers and ‘events’ referring to the actual training programmes observed in the hotels.

**Table 4.3: ‘Key informants’ and ‘events’.**

	<b>‘Key informants’</b>	<b>‘Events’ – Training programmes</b>
HOTEL A & HOTEL D	Learning & Development Director (LD3)	Welcome Programme (induction)  Developing your career
HOTEL B	Learning & Development Director (LD1)	Leading Quality Standards  Praise me reloaded
HOTEL C	Learning & Development Director (LD2)	Creating memorable experiences  Who moved my cheese
HOTEL E	Human Resource Director (HR1)	Task Trainer workshop
HOTEL F	Assistant Training Manager (ATM1)	Telephone skills

#### **4.8.3. Survey administration.**

The questionnaire was in English, and it was distributed during August 2011 and it has to be noted that during that time Ramadan, which is a religious celebration, was being honoured in Muslim countries. Consequently, the researcher had to ensure that evening times were covered during the distribution of the questionnaires so respondents included Muslim as well as non-Muslim employees. The original plan was to distribute the questionnaires on the buses from and to work. The researcher asked for access from the transportation manager of the hotel company and it was agreed that the surveys could be distributed on selected bus routes, which approximately had duration of fifteen minutes each way. The time was sufficient for each participant to complete the questionnaire. The researcher downloaded the bus routes and timings via the company's intranet site. However, after two trips made by the researcher at 6.00am from the staff accommodation to the hotels, the level of participation and interest by employees was extremely low so a different approach was adopted. Employees felt tired and sleepy and had no intention to fully complete the questionnaire therefore that option and way of collecting data ended being completely unsuccessful, a real failure.

However, the researcher developed another plan and the same day asked for permission to distribute the questionnaires in the clubhouse of the accommodation, which is a social and recreational area. In this area, employees go to eat breakfast, lunch and dinner, use the internet facilities, collect post, use the sports facilities, go to the doctor, shop at the mini market, or pray in the prayer rooms. The accommodation director granted access and the following day the researcher placed a table in the entrance of the clubhouse with a flipchart, stating that front-line employees who work on either Food and Beverage or Front Office departments can complete a questionnaire and therefore can be eligible to take part in the raffle. The researcher spent two full days from 6.00am-9.00pm collecting questionnaires at the clubhouse and then decided to continue with the survey at the staff canteens of the four hotels since the number of questionnaires after two days was insufficient. The HR managers of the hotels were informed that the data collection was going to take place in the staff canteens and during four consecutive days, the researcher was in one of the hotels' staff canteen on a daily basis from 11.00am-6.00pm.

The distribution of the questionnaires started on the 24<sup>th</sup> August 2011, with 119 collected on the first day; 83 on the second day; 92 on the third day; 45 on the fourth day; 17 on the fifth day; and 21 on the sixth day. Therefore, after six days 377 questionnaires in total were collected with 10 questionnaires being ineligible because the respondents were working at a supervisory level. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to front-line employees

within only four hotel units out of six because two of the hotels from the original sample frame changed Management Company and therefore were excluded from Phase 2 of data collection. The researcher asked so two preliminary questions to each front-line employee who was willing to complete the questionnaire:

1. Which hotel do you work in?
2. Which is your current job position?

If the employees matched the criteria then a questionnaire was given to them for completion. If not then researcher had to explain in a polite manner why they were not eligible to fill up the survey. Hence, 367 respondents fully completed the survey, which was an adequate and representative size for this study.

#### **4.8.4. Response rate.**

The qualitative part of this study had an adequate response rate even if the sample was small since all the managers in charge of the training functions in the six hotels agreed to participate. Saturation was achieved after the fourth interview but the researcher decided to complete all five interviews. In addition, the observations of the training programmes had an adequate response rate since out of 10 events eight were actually observed.

In order to calculate the response rate for the qualitative part of this study, various methods were used. It has to be noted that the company has a grade system, which identifies the level of employees regarding their job functions and occupation, and accordingly this grading system emphasize and reflect their status, benefits, and remuneration package. The grade system in the company is as follow:

- General Managers and Corporate (VPs etc.) – Executive
- Directors – Grade 1
- Managers – Grade 2
- Assistant Managers – Grade 3A
- Supervisors – Grade 3B
- Front- line employees – Grade 5 & 6

To identify the number of front-line employees the researcher based it on information provided by one of the senior hotel managers. Furthermore, table 4.4 illustrates that ultimately a representative sample of each department participated in the study.

**Table 4.4: Population of front-line employees.**

<b>Hotels</b>	<b>Number of Total Employees</b>	<b>Total number of 5&amp;6 grades employees</b>	<b>Number of 5&amp;6 grades employees only in F&amp;B / FO</b>	<b>Number of respondents /per hotel</b>	<b>Actual Number of F&amp;B respondents /per hotel</b>	<b>Actual Number of F/O respondents /per hotel</b>
Hotel A & D	2988	2457	828	149+38=187	64	85
					27	11
Hotel B	1413	1178	284	105	58	47
Hotel C	1566	1330	411	75	53	22
			Total number of 5&6 grade employees in F&B / FO	Total number of respondents	Total number of F&B respondents	Total number of FO respondents
			1523	367	202	165

The response rate as suggested by Neumain (2000) should include all eligible respondents and hence the total response rate is based on the total number of responses divided by the

total number in sample minus the ineligible. In addition, the active response rate should include the total number of responses divided by the total number in sample minus the ineligible plus the unreachable. The researcher identified the sample based on the number of employees in the Food & Beverage and Rooms Departments excluding Kitchen and Housekeeping who are grades 5 & 6. As a result the response rate for this study is  $367/1523-10=.24=24\%$

However, it has to be noted that approximately 20 per cent of grade 5 & 6 employees were on annual leave due to lower business demands in the hotels during the holy month of Ramadan. Another five per cent on local leave so the Head of Departments can clear any outstanding lieu days owed to employees, and approximately 10 per cent leave outside from the provided accommodation independently.

As a result, the active response rate for this study is  $367/1523-(10+533)=367/980=.374=37.4\%$

Baruch (1999) suggested that for academic studies involving top management or organisations' representatives a response rate of around 35 per cent is reasonable, reflecting a reasonable response rate for this study of 37.4 per cent.

#### **4.8.5. Reliability.**

In order to test the reliability of the survey, Cronbach's alpha was re-tested upon the completion of the survey. Alpha was set at 0.6 based on Berhoud (2000b, p.169) as cited in Bryman (2004) where the minimum level of 0.60 is "*good*" and refers to the case of an index of ill health used in the BHPS, which accomplished a level of 0.77. Therefore, any item less than 0.6 was considered unreliable. The following table shows the Cronbach's alpha upon completion of the quantitative data collection. Since all Cronbach's alpha results are greater than 0.6, it was a positive indicator and their reliability levels may be seen in Table 4.5. Variables measuring the constructs: Organisational support towards training, Management support towards training, Adequacy of training facilities, Perceived benefits of training were measured by a 5-point Likert scale.

**Table 4.5: Cronbach's alpha post data collection.**

Constructs	Type	Number of Variables	Score Range	$\alpha$
Organisational support towards training	Likert	5	1 to 5	0.960
Management support towards training	Likert	6	1 to 5	0.883
Adequacy of training facilities	Likert	6	1 to 5	0.880
Perceived benefits of training	Likert	13	1 to 5	0.935

## **4.9. METHODS OF ANALYSIS.**

### **4.9.1. Transcript of interviews.**

Qualitative content analysis is one method used to interpret text data amongst other methods such as ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology, and historical research (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). By using content analysis, the focus is on the characteristics of language as communication with main consideration to the actual content or related meaning of the text (Brotherton, 2008). Content analysis is perceived as a qualitative data analysis method emphasizing on the number of re-occurrences of key words, phrases, and images resulting in the production of frequencies, which can be then compared against each other (Brotherton, 2008; Patton, 2002). However, past researchers have argued that content analysis may concentrate on quantitative or qualitative aspects (Silverman, 1993; Smith, 1975). According to Weber (1990) as cited in Hsieh and Shannon (2005), content analysis goes beyond the counting of words to examining deeply for the purpose or the classification of large amounts of text into a number of categories with similar meanings. The objective of content analysis is to offer knowledge of the researched area (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Several advantages are associated with content analysis process such as cost effectiveness, inexpensive and accessible, a way to study events over a long period of time (Babbie, 1998) and data can be examined individually each year or through all years together (McBroom, 1992). Of programme, certain limitations also exist since the researcher is limited in examining already recorded-messages but at the same time, this limitation is inexistent when analysing interview data. Another limitation is the inability to test casual relationships between variables. Hence,

content analysis as an analytic method is more suitable for exploratory or descriptive studies instead of experimental and causal research (Berg, 2007). Bearing in mind that content analysis consists of three distinct categories such as conventional content analysis; directed content analysis; and summative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

In this exploratory study, the researcher has selected the summative content analysis where not only the frequencies of common words are counted but the meanings of the words are also identified. These words are explained further leading into the creation of themes, subthemes, and indicators (please refer to appendix E- Groupings of Interview Themes) fitting or adding themes to the original suggested model (please see model 2- Training model based on qualitative findings). Furthermore, it allowed the researcher to investigate a large amount of data because of the interview transcripts, identifying main themes that summarize all the answers given by the interviewees. Before proceeding with the analysis, the researcher had to identify what to count. Seven elements in written messages can be quantified such as words or terms, themes, characters, paragraphs, items, concepts and semantics (Berg, 2007).

Firstly, the interviews were transcribed in a verbatim form. Each interview schedule consisted of 31 questions (please refer to Appendix D- Transcript of interview). Secondly, after reading and re-reading the data sets, the researcher was able to get a feel for the data followed by analytic descriptions meaning the development of conceptual understandings were identified using open coding next to each response. At this phase, it was noticeable that the researcher recorded whatever appeared from within the data. The use of post notes was critical at this stage ending with 378 open coding sessions. Then, the identification of recurrent themes was used to construct a cohesive representation of data, and according to Miles and Huberman (1994), the data display can consist of matrices, diagrams, and conceptual models. Thereafter, the information was recorded in a tabulated format in which each question was illustrated followed by the five interviewees' responses for each question so to identify sub themes and the use of direct quotations from their original context were written down to justify the identification of each subtheme. Moreover, according to Schilling (2006), direct quotations can be used to justify conclusions. The next phase was the development of another table in which all the subthemes were recorded based on levels of significance and importance followed by the question occurrence and their frequency resulting into 129 subthemes. The last phase was the development of a table in which the main emerged themes and were identified with indicators, which were collated together based on similarities and overlapping of data. The aim was to reduce the information from each interview transcript so to be able to



compare the evidence based on similarities and patterns of these themes. Having simplified and categorized the information, the process of grouping and displaying data formed the last stage of the analysis process. Even if an indicator was mentioned several times the researcher counted the frequencies as many times as it appeared in different themes, so to get an accurate count (please refer to appendix E – Groupings of Interview Themes). The formation of a final table which produced eight themes and subthemes based on the count of frequencies of indicators is displayed in the following chapter under the section ‘Findings from the interviews’.

#### **4.9.2. Data analysis of Non-Participant observation.**

Ethnographic research originates from social and anthropology studies where a researcher is expected to spend a considerable amount of time in the field, and study the phenomenon under research on its social and cultural context (Iacono, Brown, & Holtham, 2009). Marshall and Rossman (1989, p.79) defined observation as *"the systematic description of events, behaviors, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study"*. In this study, the researcher attended organized events related to training programmes delivered in five star hotels in Dubai, U.A.E. aiming to understand the delivery of training programmes within its natural setting. In addition, the researcher observed verbal behaviours and physical behaviours of the participants too. Non-Participant observation allowed the collection of rich qualitative data and permitted the author to exploit the subject matter by experiencing in the field and contributing towards new insight of the subject under investigation. The researcher found that the development of an observational schedule was a great tool with high importance since it allowed recording structured data alongside with additional information for each training programme. It facilitated the field note taking as well as the analysis of the data gathered. The observational schedule was divided into three parts as mentioned previously. After transcribing all the field notes of the observational schedules a table was developed which highlights the data gathered categorized in a more organized and systematic format (please refer to Appendix F – Training observations data display). As a result, the eight observations of training programmes found to have several commonalities and few differences based on issues and challenges that the observer noted down at the time of field research and fully explained in the following chapter.

#### **4.9.3. Quantitative data analysis with the use of SPSS.**

A total sample of 367 questionnaires was collected and analysed with the use of SPSS v.20 software. As previously explained, the coding of the questionnaire facilitated the data input. The researcher began preparing the data for computer entry by numbering each questionnaire on the front of the page so to keep an 'audit trail' and the questionnaire ID number began with 001 sequence. Then the coding structure followed by converting verbal responses to numerical codes and by entering the variables, value labels and values into SPSS. After the input of all data in SPSS, the data was evaluated and checked to ensure that there are no errors occurred. After cleaning the data from some minor data entry errors, then the process of the data analysis began.

Descriptive statistics were used to transform the raw data into a possible set of interpretations. Consequently, the analysis of the demographic and employment variables in section A of the questionnaire such as gender, age, country of origin, native language, English proficiency, education, place of employment, job position, length of service and remuneration.

Through the descriptive statistics, the measure of central tendency was done by using the mean and the measure of dispersion by using the standard deviation.

The frequencies of the four constructs and the 30 variables were analysed referring to section B of the questionnaire- organisational support towards training; section C-management support towards training; section D- adequacy of training facilities and services; and section E- perceived benefits of training.

Section F- training programmes was analysed using frequencies and percentages for questions F1 and F2 which referred to the main purpose of training programmes that front-line employees have attended and the training techniques used by the trainers during the training programmes front-line employees have attended. Questions F3, F4, F5, and F6 were analysed using descriptive statistics.

After interpreting the data based on descriptive and frequencies, the next step was to examine the relationships between two variables. Hence, the statistical analysis followed correlations, which were used to measure all the thirty variables under the four constructs. According to Pfeiffer (2000) as cited in Sarantakos (2005, p.377), *"a correlation is very low if the coefficient has a value below 0.20; low if the value is between 0.21-0.40; moderate if the coefficient value is between 0.41-0.70; high if the value is between 0.71—0.91; and very high*

*if the coefficient value is above 0.91*". According to the level of measurement, the four constructs were interval-ratio and the associated test is Pearson's product-moment correlation. The aim using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was to test whether there was a linear correlation between the variables and if so whether to determine if the correlation is either positive, negative strong or weak (please refer to appendix G- Inter-item correlation matrix). Due to the correlations, another question arose that lead to explore further if the variables which formed each construct based on the literature might be grouped to form 'families'. This was particularly useful for the examination of the appropriateness of the factor analysis method for the data on the four constructs.

Factor analysis has two main purposes. Firstly, to ensure whether the answers to the questions asked suggest the presence of key variables and secondly, it can measure whether answers to some of the questions point out that there are existing 'families' of responses highlighting a coherent, multidimensional factor. Anderson (2009) suggested that using factor analysis involves assessing how strongly each variable is correlated with each of the other variables and assists in the identification of 'families' and sub-categories and the extent to which one or more variables justify for all of the variation in the data set. In addition, factor analysis assesses the validity of the questionnaire since it offers a system to determine whether the questions in the survey truly relate in a logical way to the often-multidimensional concept that is being measured (Anderson, 2009). Hence, this study used Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) in order to justify the proposed factor structure. EFA permitted the researcher to test the hypothesis that a relationship between the observed variables and their underlying latent construct(s) existed. This method aimed to discover the hidden structures within the data set. Therefore, the suggested training model, which was based on past literature and acted as a guide to the research and the relationships between the constructs, was tested statistically and confirmed. The factor analysis used principal component analysis for the extraction of factors. The factor rotation applied was Orthogonal (Varimax). Leading criteria for the analysis were that it complied with the Kaiser's criterion of selecting only factors with an eigenvalue greater than 1 and that 'the percentage of variance' which requires that the extracted factors account for a minimum of 60 per cent of the total variance (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1995). In addition, correlations amongst the factors were tested statistically and through the bivariate correlations amongst the factors. The theoretical model served as a conceptual framework during the interpretation of the results, during the analysis, and conclusion.

#### **4.10. CHAPTER SUMMARY.**

This chapter concluded that identifying the research question of HCI for front-line non managerial employees in the hospitality sector in Dubai (U.A.E), lead to the review of past research using different secondary resources. The research approach for this study is deductive since from the review of the past literature a suggested model was developed assessing the ways that HCI influence management support, organisational support, the training environment and outcomes of training interventions. Therefore, the aims of this study were established and in order to answer the research questions a mixed methods approach was adopted. The research instruments were developed and the primary data collection was conducted in two phases starting with the qualitative, which then built the quantitative part. Based on the model which was already specified and illustrated the themes and constructs were identified. Then the identification of the adequate sample was justified and the collection of data followed. The final step was to identify the adequate data analysis techniques and tests to be able to proceed with the presentation and interpretation of the results of this study that will be discussed in the following two chapters.

## **CHAPTER 5 - RESEARCH FINDINGS.**

### **5.1. INTRODUCTION.**

This part of the study will analyse and interpret the findings from the primary data collected through a mixed method approach. According to Aycan and Balci, 2000 as cited in Aksu (2005), the literature referring to training stated that three factors can affect the efficiency of training efforts such as the individual factors; organisational factors and training programme factors. Individual factors relate to behaviours towards the job and personality, educational level, training expectation and motivation levels of individuals; the organisational factors include top management, support from superiors and fellow colleagues, funding of training; and training programmes include perception of training, specialities of trainers (Aksu, 2005). Therefore, throughout the data collected this chapter will illustrate the findings related to the suggested model and constructs identified on this study.

The first section of this chapter relates to the analysis of the qualitative data which will include the analysis of the five interviews and eight observations of training programmes in five star hotels in Dubai, U.A.E. The subsequent analysis will examine the current human capital needs for front-line employees and will consider and evaluate current efforts by hotel training departments to devise and deliver training to front-line employees. Therefore, the qualitative section will include the findings from the structured interviews, which were conducted, with senior management from the Learning and Development departments of six hotels using content analysis. The final part will discuss the observations of eight training programmes, which were conducted by the researcher in six hotels.

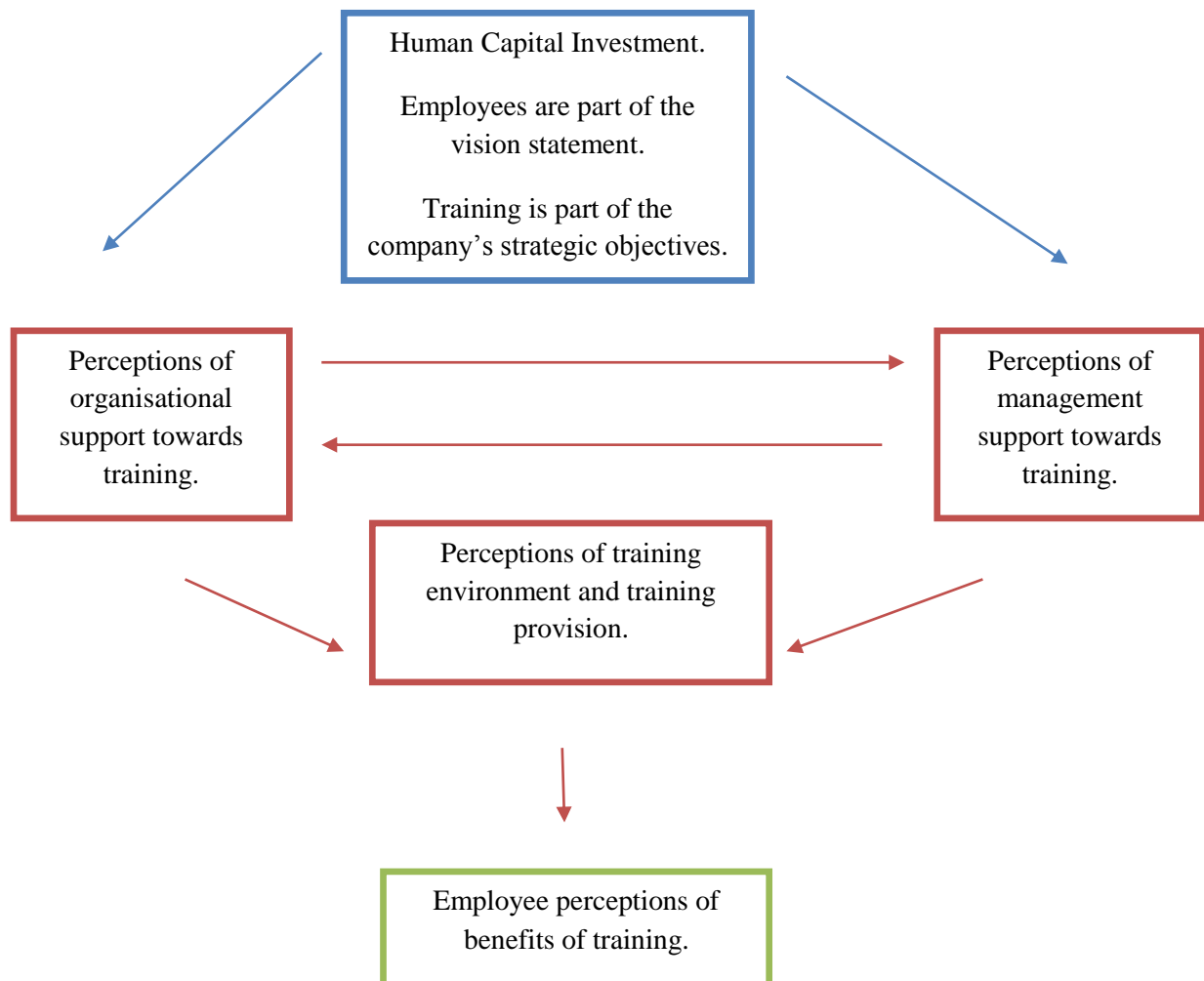
The second section of this chapter refers to the quantitative data that will be analysed based on the questionnaires distributed face to face to front-line Food and Beverage and Front-Office employees within four hotels of the hotel company. The questionnaire is divided into six sections starting with the demographics and moving into the specific elements of the study under research. The aim is to assess employees' views regarding the current investment in human capital and to identify areas for improvement. Descriptive statistical information will be displayed followed by factor analysis. Respondents' perceptions towards the organisational and management support of training will be analysed and the perceived benefits as a result of training will be discussed. Finally, information about the training

programmes will be examined to ascertain how and what the respondents have experienced during the training programmes attended.

The following model illustrates the relationships between the different dimensions based on past literature studies. It was identified that the company should perceive their employees as the most important asset therefore; employees should be included in the company's vision statement. In addition, the development of human assets meaning the front-line employees is dependent on the management support towards training and the organisational support towards training. The adequacy of the training environment is also part of the HCI and all these factors together contribute towards the perceived benefits as a result of training.

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### Model 1: Suggested Training Model.



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Based on the above-suggested model the interview schedule and observational schedule was developed followed by the survey instrument. After analysing all of the collected primary data this initial model will be revisited. The qualitative and quantitative data collected and analysed will form the basis of the findings.

## 5.2. CONTENT ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS WITH HOTEL MANAGEMENT.

The interview schedule was divided into seven main categories starting with the labour workforce composition in the hotels; counting the value of training and learning; reasons for

training; methods/tools used in the delivery of training; length of training programmes; cost of training and training evaluation. Based on the data collected from the interviews and after having transcribed each interview, themes have been drawn from the emerged data followed by a model.

### **5.2.1. Demographics of interviewees.**

The interviews were conducted with three Learning & Development Directors, one Human Resources Manager, and one Assistant Training Manager and throughout the analysis, the interviewees are referred to as: Learning and Development Directors as L&D1, L&D2, L&D3, Human Resources Manager as HR1 and Assistant Training Manager as ATM1.

### **5.2.2. Findings from interviews.**

Table 5.1 illustrates the eight themes and subthemes based on the count of frequencies of indicators, which was used to facilitate the findings interpretations.

**Table 5.1: The named themes and subthemes.**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Name of themes &amp; subthemes</b>	<b>Number of indicators per theme</b>	<b>Total frequency of indicators per theme</b>
<b>Theme I Subthemes:</b>	<b>Role of the Learning and Development Department</b> Responsibilities of L&D department (15) Learning needs analysis (LNA) (9) Training Feedback (14) Training budget (10) Training evaluation (14) Trainers development (18)	30	80
<b>Theme II Subthemes:</b>	<b>Adequacy of Training Environment and training provision</b> Training Programmes (16)	31	70



	Weaknesses of training programmes (20) Use of various training methods and techniques (30) Transfer of training (4)		
<b>Theme III</b> <b>Subthemes:</b>	<b>Challenges of Training</b> Time (3) Availability of resources (9) Cost (4) Recruitment (22) Workforce composition (15) Past work experience (3) Employee skills deficiencies (11)	30	67
<b>Theme IV</b> <b>Subthemes:</b>	<b>Employee Benefits</b> Career growth (10) Employees dissatisfaction with career progression (5) Benefits linked to attitude and behaviour (6) Benefits linked to knowledge, skills, and abilities (11)	17	32
<b>Theme V</b> <b>Subthemes:</b>	<b>Organisational Benefits</b> Benefits linked to company (14) Benefits linked to customers (10) Benefits linked to employees (6)	21	30
<b>Theme VI</b> <b>Subthemes:</b>	<b>Management support towards training</b> Managers' role (21) IDPs (4)	9	25
<b>Theme VII</b> <b>Subthemes:</b>	<b>Organisational support towards training</b> Investment (10) Training Curriculum (4)	10	14
<b>Theme VIII</b> <b>Subthemes:</b>	<b>Human Capital Investment</b> Training philosophy (4) Significance of training (7)	10	11

### 5.2.3. Theme I – Role of the Learning and Development Department.

This theme included subthemes such as the responsibilities of the Learning and Development Department, the use of Learning Needs Analysis, Feedback, Training Budget, Training evaluation, and Trainers development.

The responsibilities of the L&D department were closely associated with the following indicators: the funding of training, trainers role shifting to a consultant role, adding business value and selling training to managers and employees. The major indicator with 10 frequencies is ‘the Learning and Development department is in charge of internal and external funding of training’. However, it was stated that if there is a need for specific training then the Head of Department could invest and fund that training from their own budget rather than the Learning and Development budget and as LD3 in Hotels A & D stated:

*“But if it’s, let’s say that the engineering department are going for water cooler training, kind of training, something that they need to do specifically; very technical, it might fall under their technical budget within their department”.*

The trainers’ role shifting to a consultant role is an indicator with two frequencies, L&D department in charge of selling training is an indicator with two frequencies, and adding business value is an indicator with one frequency. As stated by LD3 in Hotels A & D:

*“...at the end of the day we are running a business, so we need to be able to say this is your survival kit. This is what we need to move forward and you need to be able to sell that. So I really think that the first step is to make sure that the leaders have the buy-in and understand it and the second part is that then the leaders go out because if they believe on it they will create, they will support it, they will make a difference on it”.*

Learning Needs Analysis (LNA) was another subtheme, which consisted of the utilization of LNA and its scope to determine the needs of the company, management, and individual employees. All of the interviewees agreed that training represents the needs of the organisation; four agreed that training represents the needs of individuals and only two agreed that training represents the needs of managers. Another indicator with six frequencies

is ‘the Use of learning needs analysis (LNA)’. As stated by ATM1 in Hotel F *“the hotels do LNA and they really try hard to find what the business needs are, what people need and what they are interest on”*. Three interviewees also stated that LNA is used for the planning of the training programmes, one believed that it is a result from quality audits, and one mentioned that LNA is used for training costs identification. All of the interviewees mentioned that the training calendar is produced from the LNA between October and November. It forms part of the training strategy, which is then communicated and presented to the executive committee of the company. The input of the executive committee and discussion further assists the L&D team to create the training plan for the coming year, which is again presented to the executive committee for final approval. Then, it is communicated to 208 departmental trainers, through the team sites and colleague areas to employees, to key stakeholders and to GMs. In addition, the planning of the annual training calendar, as described by LD1 in Hotel B, is broken down monthly by assigning key training programmes. However, the monthly training plan is revised between the 20<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of each month which is then communicated to all the hotel departments. The training calendar is communicated through notice boards, the 40 departmental trainers during the monthly departmental training meeting, and the company’s intranet emphasizing the importance of communicating and sharing the training calendar with all the hotels, managers, and employees.

Training feedback was another subtheme. This is based on guest feedback, feedback from other hotel properties, trainers’ feedback, employees’ feedback, and management (HODs) feedback. Management (HODs) feedback was also amongst the highest indicators with five frequencies. Two of the interviewees identified that the length of training programmes was based on management feedback since they are the ones who will release employees from work to attend training. As LD1 in Hotel B stated:

*“We will do a survey to find out in terms of every department what suits them best, to tailor that specifically to our calendars as they come through for next year”. “...we tend to do afternoon training because that suits our food and beverage before they start service. And then we tend to do morning training for more generic and housekeeping”.... “We really listen to the business and that then makes our job very easy*

*because we can, we get the numbers and everybody's happy and so for me that's a critical part to how we work here".*

Based on the feedback from other hotel properties within the same company and trainers feedback a revision of the training programmes was initiated reflecting on the training content, length of training programmes, and learning needs of individuals. However, management feedback was also contributing to the training evaluations, as stated by three interviewees. As LD1 in Hotel B stated:

*"we produce every SBU an evaluation report every year and that's kind of quality tip evaluation what the feedback is about the training, what is the business saying these will be useful from the interviews from colleague perspective but we also in L&A we are asking evaluation questions from department heads so that we can main use them and move forward".*

Training Budget as a subtheme embraced indicators such as the lack of financial flexibility from the company due to financial crisis, the continuous discussion of the L&D department with HODs to tailor the training budget and training calendar, the changes of training budget based on the results of the LNA, and the optimization of resources. Another responsibility of the L&D department was identified through the indicator associated to 'the training budget is an outcome of the LNA' with seven frequencies. Two of the interviewees also perceived the training budget as a main activity for the planning of training programmes as well as a tool used to identify training costs by all the interviewees. As LD1 in Hotel B said:

*"Well we are just re-designing the profit and loss structure for the company so there is a huge breakdown between the lines, financial lines, it will be everything from operating expenses which is everything that we need to run a specific training, it would be decoration which well be about the facilities to enhance learning, it will be payroll, it will be the actual programmes and the materials that we need to deliver the programme, executive development, it will be professional industry specific training ... so it stands very simple is the way forward, I look historically as well, I look back at what we achieved, what we hadn't, what we need, what we still need, what is the business saying, what is our ExCom team saying*

*some of our customers as well, what they need from us next year coming”.*

However, none of the interviewees were able to identify the hotel’s per capita training spending. Even so, all of them agreed that the training budget is 0.60 per cent to one per cent of the total hotel revenue. Optimization of resources and lack of financial flexibility due to the financial downturn in 2008 are indicators with one frequency each. Furthermore, in regards to the financial support LD3 in Hotels A & D stated: *“Especially these past 4 years it is been like a rollercoaster. The financial crisis here ended having a fifth of what we normally get”.*

Training evaluation was a subtheme linked to the utilization of a training evaluation tool annual training evaluation report, quality, feedback from HQ, employees’ feedback, and management feedback. LD1 in Hotel B described how training evaluation is carried out for all programmes and also a training evaluation tool is used throughout the company:

*“Here at the hotel it wasn’t happening and it is now happening for every programme, which I am delighted about...or if it was happening, it was happening very ad-hoc...we use one of the great leaders’ tools in terms of evaluation which is our NPS, our Net Promoter Score and so we have a score that allow us to see per facilitator and per programme how we are actually doing in terms of that...and it allows us to see as trainers our general scores and for the programme as well and then we can drill that down in terms of which programme is more popular”.*

In addition, the annual training report which is another tool used by the company to evaluate the training interventions shows partial inconsistency of its use since one of the interviewees disagreed completely. According to HR1 in Hotel E:

*“I am not seeing it being evaluated. Yes I have seen various modules being launched...but haven’t seen anybody or seen a report on, on how training wasn’t a success or training lacks this thing, hence we are coming with this, so I doubt that. But if it was happening, it would be by someone in the centre for learning and development”.*

The next indicator was 'Quality drives training initiatives' with seven frequencies. All interviewees mentioned that training plans are produced because of quality audits. Furthermore, mystery visits/shoppers and guest comments cards are used to identify which areas need further improvement through training interventions. As a result of quality audits and scores training programmes are planned to enhance and improve weak areas. In addition, it was identified by all interviewees that these quality audits are used as a tool for training evaluation and that the constant review of scores are taken into account during the LNA. According to LD1 in Hotel B *"...a classic example would be when we have one of our mystery guest audits that take place. From that there are action plans and from that, there are many training initiatives that are considered or reinforced"* and as stated by ATM1 in Hotel F: *"I get copied if there is something that continuously comes up on a content card, the general manager will sent it to me and will say create a training in this area"*.

The remaining indicators under Theme I - Role of the Learning and Development Department had frequencies below 5.

Trainers' development is another responsibility of the L&D department. All of the interviewees agreed that the company provides training to their trainers at different levels. Therefore, in order to develop the trainers various programmes are provided such as task trainer, group trainer, formal accreditation by the CIPD, observation of training programmes by training managers and directors, and spot checks of training programmes. As stated by LD1 in Hotel B:

*"...there's been some very very interesting things for me to see and observe in terms of how departments have done their training previously and how we 've had to almost get to the COS-our colleague opinion survey- to realise how badly it was done and then I got involved. So really my first few months, I had to get involved with some very heavy feedback in terms of things that were not going correctly, because we hadn't been involved as specialists...we are the ones that are the specialists and often I think that too much is delegated to the departments. You know great to delegate, but let's make sure it's still happening effectively and that has been hugely missing"*.

In Hotels A & D as described by LD3 they organize learning events to enhance the skills of trainers three times per year. Every spring they have a non-training week where trainers learn from others and enhance their personality and interpersonal skills, since these skills are extremely important for their job function, and in addition trainers have a couple of non-training days after summer and a couple of days at the end of the year. Moreover, trainers' development is critical for the effective delivery of training programmes as well as for their influence on thousands of front-line employees since trainers should be role models and demonstrate right attitude and behaviour at all times.

#### **5.2.4. Theme II – Adequacy of training environment and training provision.**

This theme embraced subthemes such as training programmes; weaknesses of training programmes; methods and techniques used to deliver training programmes; and transfer of training.

Training programmes indicators related to the training nature, annual training calendar, communication, relevance and identification of key programmes, effectiveness of training, and L&D department's staffing guide. Annual training calendar was an indicator with four frequencies. Three interviewees use the annual training calendar as a planning tool for training programmes and one interviewee indicated that it is important to communicate in advance the training calendar so employees can have access to training and be granted the required time off from their work duties to attend training. The interviewees described the process of the annual training calendar as an activity carried out between October and November. Moreover, it was then communicated through the training strategy presentation to the executive committee.

Another key indicator with four frequencies was the relevance and identification of key programmes looking into the content and type of training. One of the interviewees suggested that the identification of key programmes is used as part of the training programmes planning and three interviewees identified it as a key factor contributing towards the length of the training programmes. LD3 in Hotels A & D identified that the content of training should be linked to the expected outcomes based on the time available by stating that: *"What you want to meet and achieve? Is it an hour injection or is it something that you want to make more sustainable. As I mean by injection it's an hour inspirational or do you need to learn a skill?"* ATM1 in Hotel F also stated that: *"What we think we can deliver with a reasonable*

*amount of time because obviously when people come to a training programme they have to be out of the business...*". Three out of five interviewees agreed that they do use it to identify the L&D department's annual manpower needs and training plans are based on the assessment of occupational training needs: whereas two interviewees disagreed. So for example as stated by LD2 in Hotel C:

*"that feeds into our headcount on payroll for L&D, so points out how many people we need in our team and we ask every department to identify not only currently how many colleagues they are in their team but how many headcount wise they are budgeting for next year, so at least I get an idea because if we cap they may change the headcount so we need to know that so we can budget properly"*.

Weaknesses of training programmes included outdated training material, need for update and advance training methods and delivery techniques, development of trainers, quality of training hours, benchmark, lack of calculating ROI, under resourced, language barriers, lack of assessment and evaluation, lack of performance measurement, lack of review and follow up. Another indicator with six frequencies, which was one of the main weaknesses of training programmes, was 'lack of calculating ROI'. All of the interviewees agreed that there are no means to calculate ROI, and it is not an activity carried out by the Learning and Development department. As LD1 in Hotel B indicated: *"Not very well at the moment, not very easy... we don't clearly measure ROI..."*. Additionally, HR1 in Hotel E added that: *"I would not be able to answer that question...I doubt that we do in the company. I doubt that there is anything of this sort being happening, not that I've heard of or seen of in anywhere that I worked before"*.

In regards to the 'outdated training material' based on two frequencies as stated by LD1 in Hotel B: *"We are working with the same material 5 years on"*. Other weaknesses reflected upon the development of trainers, lack of benchmarking, and language barriers and according to LD1 in Hotel B:

*"And it's teaching, this is an example, it's teaching our trainers to become professional trainers and to really be able to deliver to groups of people. Now in 2010, and we should be videoing those people. We should be giving them feedback they should*



*be able to see it themselves...Marriott were doing things like that 15 years ago and 5 years ago when I came our programmes were like that and they still are. Our programmes for our supervisory levels are very, very dry, needing a huge amount of development ...helping to have more of an impact. There is a lot of theory-based and when we look at our English levels are not strong enough”.*

When it comes to training methods and delivery techniques, it showed that the hotels are still using heavily traditional methods and there is evidently a lack of innovation and LD2 in Hotel C’s view:

*“I think one is very classroom basic and as much as we like to think how amazing trainers we are, it doesn’t often suit and meet the needs of the business”... “There are just very traditional programmes, very traditional hospitality from the UK hotel and catering programme task trainer, group trainer, craft trainer that sort. So yes we are not really with the 2000 we are a bit traditional”.*

Transfer of training was a subtheme with very low indicators but still extremely important since managers identified it as a main weakness and challenge influencing the achievement of organisational short-term goals. LD2 in Hotel C expressed the following opinion:

*“I think short-term departments can get away doing minimum training. I think they can still achieved financial results, I’ve seen it in outlets some occasions where they don’t record training hours, they don’t measure performance of their team and yeah they can maintain for a very short-term...a drop in patterns of performance and performance of outcome...when they have guest feedback, JD power and mystery guests, you know they are scoring the team so I think you change those quickly if training is part of high standards”*

The use of various training methods and techniques included blended learning, e-learning, on-the-job, classroom training, assessment and development centres, lack in the use of

simulations, buddy system, project based trainings, scripts, role plays, coaching, mentoring and guiding.

The strongest indicator was 'On-the-job training' with eight frequencies. One interviewee perceived it as an area for improvement and all of the interviewees agreed that on-the-job training is heavily used within the hotel operations. ATM1 in Hotel F indicated that due to being in a newly opened hotel the amount of on-the-job training slightly differs from the more established hotel operations. *"...I would like to say that most of it comes that is 70 even 80% of learning through on-the-job training but right now there isn't a lot training on-the-job is just sort of going along"*. Furthermore, one interviewee believed that employees who successfully acquire the skills from on-the-job training could be further supported to attend off-the-job training.

The breakdown of training as described by LD1 in Hotel B is also similar to the above by 60 per cent being on-the-job training followed by 20 per cent being informal and 20 per cent being formal. All of the interviewees agreed that there is a shift from on-the-job and off-the-job training towards learning. Therefore, a new initiative is to increase learning in a more informal, relaxed, and social environment by refurbishing one of the hotel's staff cafeterias as a first action step aiming to allow employees share their own ideas, experiences, and knowledge.

Another strong indicator was 'Classroom facilitation' with seven frequencies. All of the interviewees agreed that classroom programmes were used to facilitate training and increase learning within the organisation amongst other training methods and techniques. HR1 in Hotel E stated that:

*"But basically I would categorize them broadly into classroom learning and online learning with a lot of focus on on-the-job because of the fact that I mentioned, we have competent people who are trained or who are trained to be trainers, to be training on-the-job so that's a grey area for me"*.

One more indicator with six frequencies was 'E-learning'. One interviewee identified E-learning as an area for improvement and all interviewees perceived E-learning as a weak training method due to the failure of its utilization, lack of line management support and lack

of understanding. As HR1 in Hotel E said: “... *but E-learning we are still lagging behind a lot, so we are not up to speed with E-learning*”.

An additional indicator with four frequencies was ‘Blended learning’. Three interviewees perceived it as an area for improvement and one interviewee mentioned that action should be taken to change the style of learning to blended learning.

The remaining indicators under Theme II - Adequacy of Training Environment had frequencies below 4.

‘Financial under-investment of L&D’ compared to other initiatives is an indicator with three frequencies. Three out of five interviewees agreed that the organisation should invest more whereas two interviewees agreed that there is a high investment in L&D. So for instance regarding under-investment in learning and development LD1 in Hotel B felt: “*We are sitting at about 0.72% at the moment...other companies are going for 4%*”. Furthermore, one interviewee also commented on the lack of hospitality related vocational programmes in the region.

### **5.2.5. Theme III – Challenges of Training.**

The theme consisted of subthemes such as availability of resources; recruitment; workforce composition; past work employee experiences; and employee skills deficiencies.

Availability of resources included indicators such as: time, insufficient investment in L&D, under-resourced in regards to L&D staffing and training facilities, sufficient investment in L&D based on benchmarking results, and cost of training. ‘Time’ was the strongest indicator with six frequencies, it was perceived as a challenge of training by two interviewees, and one interviewee associated time as a critical factor when HODs release employees to attend trainings. As LD1 in Hotel B indicated that, the time of training delivery is crucial, it has to be adjusted to the hotel business levels, and he stated that:

*“...around break times, handovers, peak business we don’t run programmes over lunch time...so for rooms is better in the morning...we can’t always meet everyone’s needs would be training at crazy times but we do staff weekend training here ...so it varies really and afternoons are much more effective the*

*trainings and mornings unless is rooms, we struggle to train in general”.*

Another association of ‘time’ related to the impact of recruitment practices was mentioned by three interviewees emphasizing the need of planning ahead the induction programmes and the need to work closely with the Human Resources department. Furthermore, LD1 in Hotel B linked time as a training challenge due to recruitment practices by stating that:

*“It also has a great impact in terms of our four day-welcome programme, it’s a huge production...recruitment was critical to understand when it was coming so we could forecast, we could have our resources effectively in place and yes I think they go very much hand-in-hand. We work very close with Human Resources”.*

All of the interviewees agreed that recruitment has an impact on training. Recruitment was perceived as a challenge for the hotel operations as well as a challenge for timing training adequately. The impact of recruitment was influenced by the provision of right programmes at the right time. Moreover, the impact that recruitment has is immense since it effects the L&D team, the creation of tailor made programmes according to each hotel property, the creation of learning opportunities, the time, the increased cost of trainings, the attraction of suitable candidates and the competition. LD3 in Hotels A & D additionally linked the impact of recruitment not only to time but cost too by saying that:

*“Most telling turning example is English for us...we can see what is the cost from taking a colleague from level 1 in English and the time to level 4 where they need to be if they are front-line for example. And then you really have to think about if they would have come with level 4 English that’s how much we would have saved and we could have spent time doing different kind of trainings”.*

However, right attitude can overcome the lack of hotel work experience or language deficiencies of front-line employees and it is noticeable on the positive knock on effect it has to the department, the team, as well as the guest experiences.

‘Cost’ was one of the highest indicators with five frequencies. Cost was related to the availability of resources as a drawback since high investment on time and money is required to provide training programmes either internal or external in nature. Cost was also perceived as a training weakness, area for improvement and part of annual workforce and training plans. As ATM1 in Hotel F stated:

*“I have done some costing ...like for orientation...but it is a little bit hard to cost everything because for example employees, colleagues from all levels will be in there, how do I know what all their salary is, all their times worth that kind of thing”.*

Workforce composition was linked to employees’ demographics and cultural diversity. All the interviewees agreed that the labour workforce is very diverse which brings out training challenges. Based on front-line employees’ demographics the strongest indicator with five frequencies showed employees’ origin from ‘South-East Asian countries’ followed by ‘Asia Subcontinent’ with four frequencies, and the rest with a frequency of one from ‘Other Middle Eastern (GCC) and Arabic speaking countries’, ‘Central Asia, Russia & CIS countries’, and ‘Western & Eastern European countries’. In the company overall there are over 200 nationalities and as stated by ATM1 in Hotel F: *“don’t know exactly...41 different nationalities but F&B and Front office 12 to 15 different nationalities”*. ‘Cultural diversity’ of employees it is a challenge for training and it is also perceived because of recruitment practices. In line with this HR1 in Hotel E stated:

*“So for us human resources it’s one of the challenges...to maintain that kind of diversity and see what the needs of our resort is like...for example my resort is more Arabic focused...but then I also know if I am getting a lot of line colleagues who are Arabic speakers they might not be very good in English. So my investment in terms of English levels would probably be more than that of xxx property...so it depends very much on the type of property you are and the demographics that you have within the property”.*

Past work employee experiences was associated with two indicators emphasizing the lack of employees’ work experiences in a luxury hotel environment, and the lack of employees’

luxury service provision as expected by five star hotels. This is seen as a challenge for training and has a negative impact during the recruitment process.

Employees' skills deficiencies included the language barriers, the need for improvement of language skills, lack of skills, inadequate product knowledge and selling techniques which could lead to service failure, poor Food and Beverage skills, lack of basic guest service skills and unprofessional ways of working.

Under employee skills deficiencies the most noticeable indicator with five frequencies was the 'language barriers'. Four interviewees associated language barriers as a main challenge and one interviewee linked language barriers as a weakness of training programmes. LD1 in Hotel B stated that there is an intense provision of English programmes emphasizing the number of classes needed to go from level 0 to level 1 *"18 classes to go from level 0 to level 1"*. HR1 in Hotel E emphasized that language is a barrier by giving the following example:

*"it comes down to the language barrier. I wouldn't call it a weakness in the training programme but it's a weakness in terms of us being able to be successful, to impact knowledge. Because I might run a training module, but then I would have a bunch of stewards sitting there from India or Sri Lanka who might not even understand it, sitting there for the sake of it because their managers have pushed them into it because one of their bonus KPIs is training. So that for me, that is a weakness. I don't know how that can be solved maybe having training programmes in multi-different languages...but do we have that sort of resources or do we have that sort of budget? I don't think so".*

The remaining of the indicators under Theme III – Challenges of Training had frequencies below four.

#### **5.2.6. Theme IV- Employee Benefits.**

This theme was closely associated with subthemes such as career progression including employees' dissatisfaction with career progression; benefits related to employees' attitude and behaviour; and benefits linked to knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Career progression included indicators like career growth, employee progression, and succession planning. 'Career growth' with six frequencies was one of the strongest indicators. Two of the interviewees perceived 'Career growth' as part of the company's training philosophy. One interviewee linked career growth to the representation of individual needs, one interviewee believed that it is a result of training investment, another interviewee emphasized that it is linked to the value of training and development and its impact on individuals and finally, one more interviewee mentioned that is a reason for training. LD1 in Hotel C stated that:

*"...just done a mini colleague opinion survey at xxx hotel name and I think we always need to separate the two training why is colleagues been pretty happy with, what's available to them, that they have the training to do their job, that they know what's available but is more the career opportunities that they don't feel they are getting access to".*

On the other hand interestingly enough interviewees mentioned that there is a high level of employees' dissatisfaction with the following indicators all having a frequency of one. Amongst them career progression due to lack of career opportunities, lack of access to employees' professional growth, false promises given by management, lack of transparency regarding internal promotions, and lack of internal talent promotions. LD1 in Hotel C said that: *"I think it would be good to align it...I think they should be careful not to promise because we have that history 'you attend five programmes and you will be a team leader' and that is unrealistic"*. As stated by LD2 in Hotel C:

*"...just done a mini colleague opinion survey at xxx hotel and I think we always need to separate the two training why is colleagues been pretty happy with, what's available to them, that they have the training to do their job, that they know what's available but is more the career opportunities that they don't feel they are getting access to".*

Lack of internal promotions and lack of setting up targets or KPIs of internal promotions were also addressed by LD3 in Hotels A & D: *"As far as I know we don't have a percentage...and this is definitely where I think we should get better at. To really structure that, target that, define that and measure our success on internal promotions"*.

In relation to the benefits linked to employees' attitude and behaviour, the main indicators were employees' values, employees' attitudes, employees' motivation, increase rapport with managers and team, high employee satisfaction with training provision, happy employees, increase confidence levels on selling, and increase product knowledge and awareness. All of the above indicators had a frequency of one. As said by LD1 in Hotel B: *"If you develop, motivate, inspire, coach, guide, nurture, support, pays fairly, recognize then that will naturally lead to people that are stimulated, engaged and highly effective..."* As stated by LD1 in Hotel B: *"It's really simple happy people equals to happy guests"*. In addition, through inspirational training employees' attitude can change and as stated by LD3 in Hotels A & D:

*"Let's say the Fish philosophy which is highly inspirational and it is showing people that you have a choice in life and you can go out and do it and if people are committed within their heart they will go out and make a difference which is very nice"*.

Benefits linked to knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA) consisted of the development of KSA and competencies with a total of nine frequencies. As stated by HR1 in Hotel E: *"I think it's very very valuable because an organisation cannot perform with misfits and in terms of misfits, I say incompetent people"*.

The remaining of the indicators under Theme IV- Employee Benefits had frequencies below 3.

#### **5.2.7. Theme V- Organisational Benefits.**

This theme was associated with the following subthemes: Benefits linked to company benefits linked to customers; and benefits linked to employees.

All of the interviewees agreed with the fact that investing in human capital and investing in on and off-the-job training is a competitive strategy to generate sustainable growth and wealth. Indicators affiliated with company benefits included business growth, wealth, impact on product, and reputation of the company. So for example the three main targets in hotels A & D are guest loyalty, employee loyalty, and profit and as stated by LD3: *"So that's like the three goals and really everything we do in L&D links to these three goals"*. Furthermore,



indicators such as the fact that training assists with opening of new hotel properties, organisational goals are linked to L&D activities, training is an integral part to company success, alignment of service, keeping up standards and reputation, maintaining brand integrity, assisting in continuous expansion and raising brand awareness worldwide also formed part of the subtheme.

The strongest indicator with three frequencies was 'organisational goals linked to L&D activities' which was perceived as a key element for the achievement of short term and long term goals along with the development of employees' skills reflected on the company's economic performance. As stated by LD3 in Hotels A&D: *"So that's like the three goals guest loyalty, colleague loyalty, and profit and really everything we do in L&D links to these three goals"*. As said by LD1 in Hotel B *"...if we look at our WIGs (Wildly Important Goals) that we have our objectives...training sits under three...the three WIGs...so I think yep 100%"*.

All of the interviewees agreed that staff training is very important to the achievement of long-term goals for the organisation but only four out of the five interviewees agreed that staff training is very important to the achievement of short-term goals. Consequently, staff training is part of the organisations' five big plans. As stated by HR1 in Hotel E is a continuous affair: *"The long-term thing could be English training where I am developing them and giving them a certain skill, which they then obviously can over a period of time to use and contribute towards the success"*.

Customer benefits included the following indicators: guest loyalty and repeat customers, guest satisfaction, creation and provision of best guest experiences and overall positive impact on customer perceptions. All of the above indicators had frequencies of two and perceived as outcomes of training investment. For instance according to LD1 in Hotel C: *"if we look after our colleagues or people the guests and the profits will come so I strongly believe that investing will help things"*.

Employee benefits consisted of the subsequent indicators such as the creation of development opportunities, employee loyalty and retention, employee empowerment, and employee engagement, which were perceived as a result of training investment. The above indicators

had frequencies of one with the exception of ‘employee loyalty and retention’, which had two frequencies.

The remaining of the indicators under Theme V- Organisational Benefits had frequencies below three.

#### **5.2.8. Theme VI - Management support towards training.**

This theme contained two subthemes: the managers’ role towards training; and Individual Development Plans (IDPs).

Managers’ role towards training was supplemented by the financial support from the operational managers towards human capital investment, departmental influence towards the encouragement and culture of learning, management empathy, management involvement in training, follow up and commitment, lack of departmental training, required time off to be allocated to employees to attend training, and communication of business levels. The strongest indicator was ‘business levels’ linked with eleven frequencies perceived as a factor influencing the length of programmes as well as management support towards training by granting time off to front-line employees to attend training. As said by LD3 in Hotels A & D:

*“We ask the different departments what is a good time of the day to do training. Certain things we also look at like periods ...the banqueting, summer is quiet and we make a big drive in English, like intensive programmes during summer.”*

As stated by LD1 in Hotel B:

*“So when those programmes take place in the business and we are delivering them, they need to be matching the business needs, and so we tend to do short bursts of training, so a 30 minute session to make an awareness of a particular topic, a 15 minute session to get in there to motivate our colleagues, to teach them something and if it’s a generic topic that everybody goes through in a month”.*

Under the individual development plans (IDPs) two indicators were included the value of IDPs and the need to teach managers on how to complete the IDPs. The value of IDPs had three frequencies and it was perceived as a tool that could represent individual needs. Moreover, interviewees agreed that IDPs are important for recording employee skills

development. Nevertheless, as stated by LD1 in Hotel B: *“We had around 330 IDPs...and only 104 of them I am accepting; the rest are going back to the leaders”*. The above statement reflects the need to teach managers how to complete appropriately the IDPs.

In order to ensure that employees' skills are developed there is a link to the hotels' 'wildly' important goals. These goals act as a catalyst increasing employees' confidence on selling, employees' product knowledge, and awareness too. In addition, the hotels are trying to be ahead of competition and hence guest perceptions through the use of social media, service comparisons, value for money, and overall guest feedback are amongst the tools used to monitor performance. As stated by LD2 in Hotel C:

*“...guests are very perceptive you know. They look on trip advisor, they look on social media, and they are comparing constantly the service they received, the value for money so...it's essential and we keep very close focus on what our guests are saying and the people out there even if it is repeat guests, ...even in the local market people coming for dinner and leave suggestions”*.

HR1 also supported the above from a different angle and in regards to employees' deficiencies, he stated that:

*“If they are not skilled enough, especially in our industry, if they are not skilled enough to know their product, if they are not skilled enough to sell their product and if they are not skilled enough to satisfy the guests' needs, I think it's a complete failure”*. Therefore, emphasizing that lack of employee skills lead to underperformance, low efficiency, increase on wastage and accidents, repetition of tasks, and lower customer satisfaction.

The remaining indicators under Theme VI - Management support towards training had frequencies below three.

#### **5.2.9. Theme VII – Organisational support towards training.**

This theme was connected to two subthemes: financial investment; and training curriculum.

Financial investment was linked to the following indicators. For instance, high organisational support, high importance of training budget, investment being linked to organisational values, positive treatment of Human Capital, training being linked to organisational objectives, meeting hotel goals and organisational belief in employee investment.

Three interviewees agreed that there is high organisational support and two agreed that the financial investment towards training is similar to other initiatives. However, two of the interviewees agreed that there could be an increase on the financial investment towards training and one disagreed because in his view the financial investment towards training is very low.

The strongest indicator was ‘high organisational support’, which had three frequencies. This indicator was perceived by one of the interviewees as high financial investment by the company and two others referred to it as high organisational support when compared the financial investment towards training to other hotel initiatives. Nevertheless, there is a positive organisational belief in employees’ investment. Consequently, high importance is given to the training budget by the organization. As stated by LD1 in Hotel B regarding positive support from corporate management:

*“I think we get a lot...I still want us to have an overall higher percentage of that 1%...I think that depends on your leaders, and our leader is very people focused. So he is very passionate about training and human resources and how our people feel and so we get that support”.*

However, one interviewee mentioned that the financial investment towards training is high but due to the workforce diversification, lack of employees’ work experience in five star hotels, and low skill-set of employees, hence human capital investment needs to be even higher to cover basic training needs of individuals. As stated by ATM1 in Hotel F:

*“Actually in Dubai is more than I’ve seen in other places I’ve worked, I think just because of the way...massive challenges are as bringing people over, that their English is not strong and they have to invest a lot more in training. But saying that I think they invest a lot in such basic training that they don’t always get to move ahead...so much time and so much money*

*to invest in all of that and then if you kind get stuck in that place without kind of moving forward to another level or anything”.*

Additionally, it was added by ATM1 in Hotel F that:

*“whereas in other places I’ve seen they don’t. I never worked in a hotel before I came to Dubai that actually has a training department, is not its own department but they do invest in other ways in training in other places but is because they also don’t always have to worry about just as these basics, they are working towards elevating the service they are giving already so I guess yes they do invest quite a lot of money on it”.*

Comparing training investment to other initiatives one interviewee believed that it is an area, in which the company when facing economic downturns reduces financial support. LD1 in Hotel B stated that:

*“...We have seen it last year and a half and when I started with the company three years my budget was crazy and my first piece of feedback was make sure you’ll spend everything or you’ll get in trouble, compare to...wiser and realistic which is the line in fluctuation with the revenue coming in”.*

Training curriculum was the second subtheme including the following indicators: the design of curriculum, the representation of organisational needs, and adhering to the company’s curriculum.

The strongest indicator with three frequencies was ‘the design of curriculum’. This indicator represents the organisational needs and identifies the length of the training programmes since training managers have to adhere based on the company’s curriculum. Furthermore, the design of curriculum is associated with the organisational needs such as hotel goals and financial targets, and hence training needs to comply with the hygiene, health and safety, and legal needs. As LD1 in Hotel B stated the length of training programmes are linked to the curriculum but still there are certain issues to looked into *“...a lot of being prescribed in terms of the xxx company curriculum, so I am hoping some of those things will be reviewed. Because I don’t think that some of them match what we actually need in business”.*

The remaining indicators under Theme VII – Organisational support towards training had frequencies of one.

#### **5.2.10. Theme VIII - Human Capital Investment.**

This theme was linked to two subthemes: the training philosophy of the organisation; and the significance of training.

The following indicators formed the training philosophy of the organisation: inspiration, making a difference, impact of learning contribution towards organisational success, and succession planning. All of the interviewees agreed that the company values training and learning. All of the indicators had frequencies of one. As said by LD1 in Hotel B their training philosophy is linked to the mission of the company and stated that:

*“We have a mission that’s all about as a corporate company and a regional mission that’s all about us inspiring and making a difference and seeing career growth and progression as we go through. So it’s a statement that kind of weaves those kinds of words ...for this xxx hotel is all about creating ultimate experiences one guest at a time”.*

Furthermore, training philosophy is associated with human capital investment, employee continuous growth, and progression, accountability of employees to take initiatives and learn more in the workplace. As stated by LD3 in hotels A & D:

*“I believe as a company our philosophy is strong in favour in learning and development I think the fact that we have this spoke function in every property is not combined to HR we do a lot of developing trainers and word of mouth and we do have a dedicate budget for training which I think is a good sign. So continuous growth and succession planning is starting to get marked but quite a long way to go”.*

The significance of training entailed indicators such as employee progression, employee investment, creation of opportunities, creation of learning opportunities, job skills enhancement, and employees’ attitude change via inspirational training.

As stated by LD3 in Hotels A & D their motto is: *“to ensure that our colleagues can be the best...by trying to change habits and attitudes to a more professional level, which fits the culture of the organisation”*. The strongest indicator was employee progression with a frequency of two.

However, it has to be noted that all of the interviewees agreed that ROI is not computed in the organisation and as stated by LD3 in Hotels A & D: *“We don’t, we don’t have a proper sort of formula, we do the evaluations, we really look at what we do and everything but we don’t have a specific formula”*.

### **5.3. DATA ANALYSIS OF OBSERVATIONS.**

The following section will discuss the findings based on a narrative way by describing what happened during the training programmes and what has been learned about the study population including the participants as well as the facilitators and the training setting. The training environment will be explained in further details by highlighting the actual happenings.

#### **5.3.1. Part I – Venue of observed training programmes.**

The observations of the training programmes were conducted between June 2010 and October 2010 in five different hotels in Dubai, U.A.E. Out of the eight training programmes the location varied since five programmes took place in training rooms whereas the rest took place either in a restaurant, sports room or conference room. The reason of utilizing various rooms and not just training rooms were either due to the number of participants, the type of training or no availability of training rooms. The topics of the training programmes that were observed included the following: telephone skills, leading quality standards, praise me reloaded, welcome programme, developing your career, creating memorable experiences, who moved my cheese, and task trainer workshop. All of the rooms were signposted so it was easy to access the location. The classroom set up was similar, two out of eight had a theatre style and the remaining six had a U-shape. The trainers always welcomed the participants upon arrival and it was observed that they also thanked the participants for being present. The physical working conditions of the rooms overall were good. In regards to the air condition, seven out of eight had good room temperature except one training session ‘Creating Memorable Experiences’ which was conducted in the sports room with poor air conditioning.

The same training session had very poor lighting meaning that there was too much natural lighting with no blinds, which made it extremely difficult to view the displayed information from the screen as well as the videos, which were played. The font of the written part in the presentation was small making it difficult to read the content material of the slides.

The audiovisual equipment used was in good working condition except in two cases. In the training session ‘Creating Memorable Experiences’ it was just adequate and the assistance of IT personnel was requested. It was poor during the training session ‘Who moved my cheese?’ which affected the starting time of the session. Due to IT related issues the training commenced 10 minutes later in both of the above mentioned programmes and during the session ‘Who moved my cheese?’ despite the physical assistance from the IT department, the audio was of a very poor quality, which in turn affected the effective use of the programme - CD. It was exceptionally hard to hear, very poor sound, and it was obvious that participants were disappointed.

In regards to refreshments availability, some programmes were conducted during the Holy Month of Ramadan and therefore no refreshments were available to the participants. Generally, though it was observed that in three training programmes there was a good range of refreshments whereas the rest of the training programmes varied between adequate and poor provision of refreshments. This is because participants could go to the staff canteen during the break times where a range of F&B services are provided to employees for free.

### **5.3.2. Part II – Profile of participants.**

There were 149 participants in the observed training programmes but the number of attendees varied in each session. For example, the ‘Task Trainer Workshop’ had eight participants, whereas ‘Creating Memorable Experiences’ had 32 participants and the ‘Welcome Programme’ had 30 participants. The gender breakdown of the 149 participants comprised 54 females and 95 males. The origin of the participants was very diverse with the highest number, 58 participants, and coming from the Asia Subcontinent. Other origins included: South East Asia, 29 participants; the Middle East (GCC) and other Arabic speaking countries, 20 participants; non-Arabic countries, 12 participants; Central Asia, Russia and CIS, 10 participants; Western and Eastern Europe, six participants; U.A.E. Nationals, five participants; Central & South America, one participant; Australia & South Pacific, one participant. The training programmes demonstrated the heavy reliance on expats, the diversity of the workforce, and the low numbers of locals.



Their designated area of work was mainly rooms and F&B, however during the ‘Praise me reloaded’ training session, employees from the stewarding, security, and spa departments were also present. A wide range of mixed departments was also observed during the ‘Task Trainer Workshop’ ranging from rooms, to F&B, to transportation, to retail, to finance and to medical. The remaining six programmes had employees only from the rooms and F&B departments.

### **5.3.3. Part III – Training content and length of programmes.**

The training programmes were conducted either in the morning or in the afternoon depending on the business levels of the hotels and the length of the training programme. Starting and finishing times were generally in accordance with the training schedule and only two training programmes, as mentioned previously, commenced 10 minutes late due to IT related issues. In all of the programmes, the training topics were introduced alongside the aims and objectives of each session. The training agenda was established through the presentation with the exception of one programme ‘Leading Quality Standards’ where the trainer just briefly mentioned the scope of the next 30 minutes session. Another example was during the session ‘Who moved my cheese’ where the trainer made use of the DVD programme aid lasting 20 minutes and explained to the participants the content of the programme.

As previously mentioned the length of the training programmes varied from 30 minutes to three days. For instance, the ‘Leading Quality Standards (LQA)’ training programme took place in the restaurant of the hotel prior to the commencement of dinner service, targeting the waiters and hosts. It is known as an ‘injection’ training meaning that it is short in length (30 minutes) and it is a refresher programme arising from the results from a mystery shopper to maintain standards. The actual mystery shopper result was 75 per cent and the hotel target was 77 per cent, therefore the need for conducting the training session was initiated by senior management. The training environment had more of an informal set up (U shape) with the facilitator just sharing skills as to how front-line employees can personalise their interactions with guests. The content of the training session related to ‘confidence’, ‘posture’, ‘eye contact’, ‘product knowledge’, ‘ways of starting a conversation with a guest and farewell at the end of the interaction’. The facilitator used none of the audiovisual equipment even though it was an interactive session where participants are expected to learn through a question-answer session and the level of participation between the participants was high. Out of the 13 participants, six were female and seven were male. After the session, a mini quiz

was handed out to participants to assess their level of understanding. The learning outcomes were achieved successfully since all the participants loudly shared their answers. An evaluation form was not handed out for this training session which was considered a weakness by the observer. However, a follow up session was scheduled for the end of the month to enhance further the acquired skills.

The observed training programmes were conducted for various reasons. For instance, four training programmes were conducted because participants needed new information or skills, one because it was a refresher to maintain standards, one was delivered based on an HOD's request for it, one because it was a new programme on offer and one because it was mandatory for all the staff to complete as per the GM's instruction.

During the training session, which is mandatory for all new employees 'Welcome Programme', it was observed that the length of it was amended from four days to three days and the information was delivered in a more effective way. Two trainers were mainly involved with the delivery of the training programme. However, it was observed that other members, either HODs or lower managers, were present to explain topics related to their departments. For instance, on day one the company vision, mission guidelines, and hallmarks were shared with the participants. An introduction to the organisations' culture, followed by a DVD which illustrated the company's' global portfolio and further growth in the coming years was played. An introduction to the hotels' executive committee as well as the different guest facilities and guest services available in the resort were explained in detail followed by a tour of the hotel. An activity that took place at the hotel's gym was very successful since all the participants were physically involved in a fitness exercise conducted by a fitness instructor. Then lunch was arranged in two restaurants so 30 participants were split into two groups. After the lunch break an introduction and explanation of local culture and laws was shared with the participants to culturally acclimatize them. The Dubai Code of Conduct was thoroughly discussed. On day two, an introduction to the HR department of the hotel was given by highlighting policies and procedures relevant to the participants. It was followed by an introduction to the Business Excellence department and then the English assessment took place by an outsourced company. The instructors assessed the participants in three areas; writing, reading comprehension, and oral by performing tests which lasted two hours overall. The aim of the assessments was to identify the newcomers' level of English and register them in the English programmes according to their level if needed. It was then followed by an introduction to the Occupational Health and Safety department. Day three included refreshing

what the participants had learnt so far in terms of the guidelines and hallmarks of the company followed by the explanation of the appraisal process. Cultural awareness was the next topic introduced covering understanding the local culture, cultural barriers, culture shock, and business etiquette. The last topic introduced highlighted the importance of employees training and development and the explanation of employees cross training in other departments as well as the relevant forms utilised in training such as ‘colleague cross training form’ and ‘monthly training record’. The above training session was very well coordinated and on a daily basis, new content was introduced and delivered to the participants. Many activities were conducted related to the content, icebreakers were used, and individual assessments were used to identify the level of English of each participant. The participants asked many questions, since it is a new experience for them and they have to adjust not only to the company norms but also to the country, culture, and way of living. Overall, it was a very successful training programme with a lot of useful information, which could be used on a day-to-day basis both in and out of the job. It can be characterized as a very lively and innovative way of delivering a welcome programme since all participants were highly engaged and instilled a positive experience of their socialization process.

In most cases the skills that participants could learn were generic including personalised interaction with guests, appraisals, orientation, career development, customer service, need for change, and career and self-development. The one exception where the training targeted specific skills was the half day morning ‘Telephone Skills’ programme conducted because the participants needed new information and skill set. The trainer used different resources such as whiteboard, flipchart, presentation, and audio. The main training techniques used were learning through questions as well as role-plays. The content related to ‘telephone script’ explained the benefits of answering calls in a professional way, and statistical information of telephone calls traffic and call tracking of sister properties during 2005. It was observed that not all of the participants were actively involved due to lack of interest or language barrier. For example, one participant was very uninterested and spent almost the entire session just texting on her mobile phone. Two other participants of Arabic descent were unable to contribute due to their lack of English skills in comprehension, writing, and speaking. Nevertheless, it was noticeable that one participant was translating the content for them from English to Arabic so they did not feel excluded and were partially able to learn the training content. This training session had a follow up and a training evaluation sheet was given to the

participants. The learning outcomes were achieved by most of the participants with the exception of two due to the language barrier.

The activities used by the trainer were efficient, specifically when one of the activities involved conducting a mystery call in a hotel in Dubai and then discussing the pros and cons of the call amongst the group. Hence, participants were asked to discuss the way the operator answered the call. The participants identified that the person answering the phone was very polite however, he had a monotonous voice and the answers given to the caller reflected that style too. During the second activity, the participants were divided into two groups and were asked to list the expectations of a guest when calling the hotel. Not all the participants were involved during that activity and the observer believes that is due to the size of the group, since eight participants round a flipchart did not seem to be effective. Another activity related to a maize exercise, which was completed in pairs and was an easy exercise for the participants to complete. It was a very good use of an icebreaker by the trainer. The last activity involved a role play which was the main activity of the training session. In pairs of two, one of the participants had the role of an employee and the other participant had the role of the caller. Then they had to give feedback to each other based on the telephone script, which was given and discussed by the trainer throughout the session. It was a very effective exercise, since all of the participants had clear guidelines of what to do and what was expected from them to achieve. However, one of the main weaknesses was the fact that two participants had to conduct the role play in Arabic and a third person had to translate to the rest of the group. Moreover, another observation reflected on the shyness of participants giving constructive feedback to each other due to cultural differences, especially participants from South East Asian countries and the Subcontinent. The main weaknesses of the training session that were observed by the researcher were: the out dated material referring to statistics of 2005 in relation to calls traffic and tracking; the disengagement and language barrier of participants.

The resources used to deliver the training included whiteboard, flipcharts, visual displays, and audio. Only one programme did not use any of the above-mentioned resources due to the nature of the training programme 'LQA'.

The techniques used included learning through questions, role-plays, group discussions, demonstrations, and individual self-learning. It was observed that the delivery was very efficient and effective however, the group discussions in two of the training programmes

‘Telephone Skills’ and ‘Creating Memorable Experiences’ were quite weak due to the language barrier and high number of participants. The disseminated information was associated to the topic of the training programme. For example, during the ‘Praise me reloaded’ training session the setup of the room was very informal with the use of bin bags for the seating of the participants. Music was also played prior to the commencement of the session. The content of the training session related to the benefits of appraisal and performance reviews followed by the appraisal and review cycle. The definition of a competency was explained and the different competency families linked to the company. Each competency family was related to job levels and their rating scales were fully explained. The steps prior to the appraisal were explained and ways of reactions based on management feedback were introduced too. The link of the appraisals with the IDPs was further explained. However, it was observed that minimum activities were used such as listing the benefits of appraisal, which was done through an activity where 17 participants were split into two groups, and with the use of flipchart participants were asked to develop a list of appraisal benefits. The second activity referred to the selection of the most common competencies and a discussion was initiated as to how these competencies may affect the appraisal process. Moreover, during the presentation the trainer asked questions in regards to the delivered content in order to identify the level of understanding of participants as well as to increase the level of concentration and engagement of participants. However, it was observed that the trainer was unable to judge if the learning outcomes had been achieved since the participants were not given an activity in which they had to fill in their own appraisal form. Another weakness is that there was no follow up of this training programme. An evaluation sheet was distributed amongst the participants to rate and evaluate the training session. Overall, the training session was conducted in a very relaxed environment with high levels of interactions. However, the lack of a third activity where participants could apply the gained knowledge during the training session was a missed out opportunity.

Follow up of the training programmes was a very weak point as noticed by the observer. Out of the eight training programmes, only two programmes had a follow up session referring to ‘Telephone Skills’ and ‘Task Trainer’ and one programme had a follow up written assessment at the end of the month referring to ‘LQA Standards’. A training evaluation sheet was consistently handed out at the end of each session to the participants with only one exception during ‘LQA Standards’ since it lasted only 30 minutes.

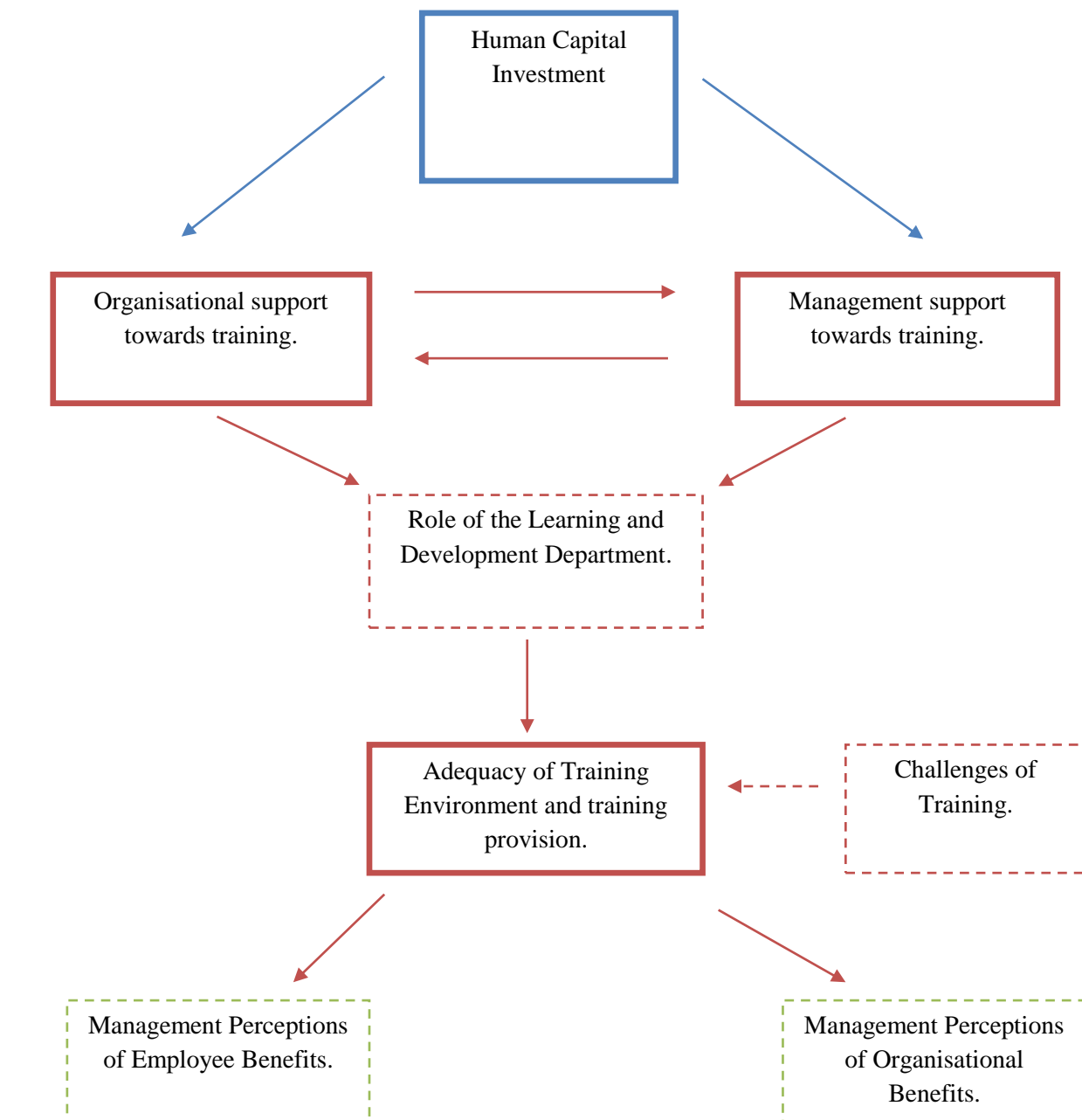
In regards to the achievement of the learning outcomes, all of the programmes had related activities to assess the level of understanding but during the 'Praise me reloaded' it was identified that there is a need for an additional activity to be included to assess if participants could fill in appropriately an appraisal form. Another example based on the training 'Developing your career' where the trainer gave a three hours presentation explaining that employees' career progression is not dependant only on higher management but on individuals themselves and hence employees have to take control and ownership of their own future plans and promote self-directed careers. Real examples of employees who have stepped up the ladder were shared with the participants as a motivator tool. It was a new programme on offer; with a total of 13 participants out of which five were females and eight males. Different activities were introduced with the use of a flipchart. During the first activity, the participants were split into groups of three and they had to find items as per their cards to achieve working goals. During the second activity the participants were asked to draw pictures that illustrated achievable working goals and then a third activity where participants were asked to write a SMART objective with information based on the first activity. Overall, the activities were successful however during the presentation the facilitator had snapshots from the company's intranet which were extremely hard to see. Another weakness of the programme is that all participants should be able to practice their skills by giving them more time to do exercises that are more practical and actually use the intranet. The use of computers would be ideal for this training session so the participants could see how to upload their CVs in the TMS or even how their appraisals are linked to SMART and to their career growth. The other weakness of the programme related to the training room and the F&B services. The room was infested with small flies, which were extremely annoying and disrupting, and the tea and coffee facilities outside the room were poorly set up lacking basic hygiene standards.

Overall, the training programmes were delivered efficiently. Trainers utilized different uses of training techniques, length of training programmes vary according to the content in which most cases sufficient time was allocated to deliver the content, hand-outs were distributed to participants to review the information at their own time, and learning outcomes were linked to the content of the programmes. Non-participant observation was the most appropriate method since the presence of the observer did not interrupt the training programmes and participants as well as trainers did not feel unease. Furthermore, there was no risk of participants being affected by the presence of the researcher since there were no interactions

during the training programmes and the researcher had more time to record the data straightforwardly. Based on the above findings the following model was produced which added four additional dimensions to Model 1. The added dimensions refer to the role of the learning and development department which also influences the training environment; the challenges of training being part of the training environment; and the management perceptions of benefits as a result of training at an individual and organisational level.

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**Model 2: Training model based on qualitative findings.**



## 5.4. PROFILE OF FRONT-LINE EMPLOYEES.

Information was collected to identify the workforce characteristics working as front-line employees in the hotels. Further comparisons have been made between the respondents to identify new trends within the sample under research. This section provides a demographic profile of the 367 respondents who are front-line employees in the Food and Beverage and Front-Office departments within four hotels of the hotel company. The demographic profile comprises of gender, age, country of origin, hotel employer, job position, tenure, salary, qualification, native language, and level of proficiency in English.

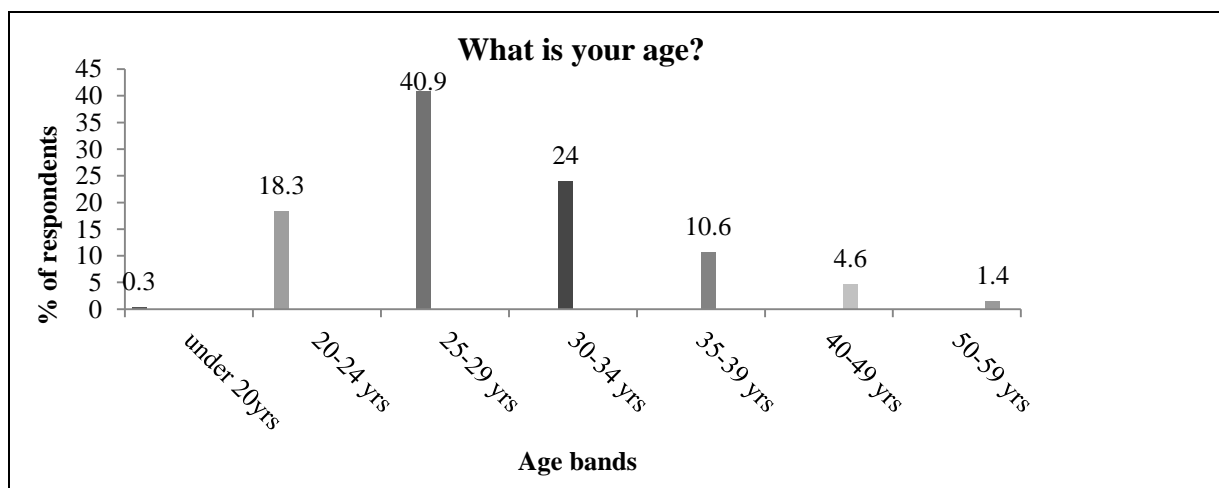
### 5.4.1. Gender.

The respondents were asked to indicate their gender based on a dichotomous variable with nominal data. Out of the 367 respondents, 74.1% (n=272) were male and 25.9% (n=95) female.

### 5.4.2. Age.

Respondents were asked to identify their age band on a multiple-choice single response scale with nominal data.

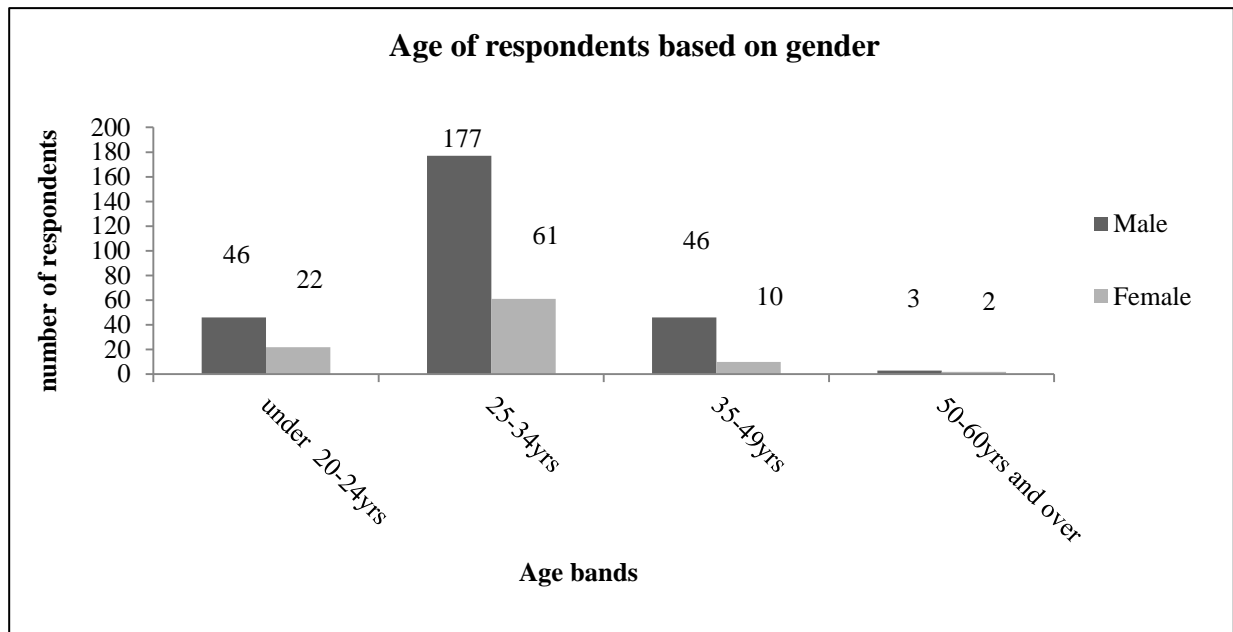
**Figure 5.1: Age of respondents.**



Out of the eight age groups, the largest age group was 25-29 years old at 40.9% (n=150), followed by 30-34 years old at 24% (n=88). The two lowest age groups were those aged 50-59 years old, 1.4% (n=5) and the under 20 years old at 0.3% (n=1).



**Figure 5.2: Age of respondents based on gender.**



Out of the four merged age bands, 177 respondents are males between the age of 25-34 years old and 61 are females between the same age group. This study showed that the average age band was between 25-34 years old represented by 64.8% of respondents.

#### **5.4.3. Country of origin.**

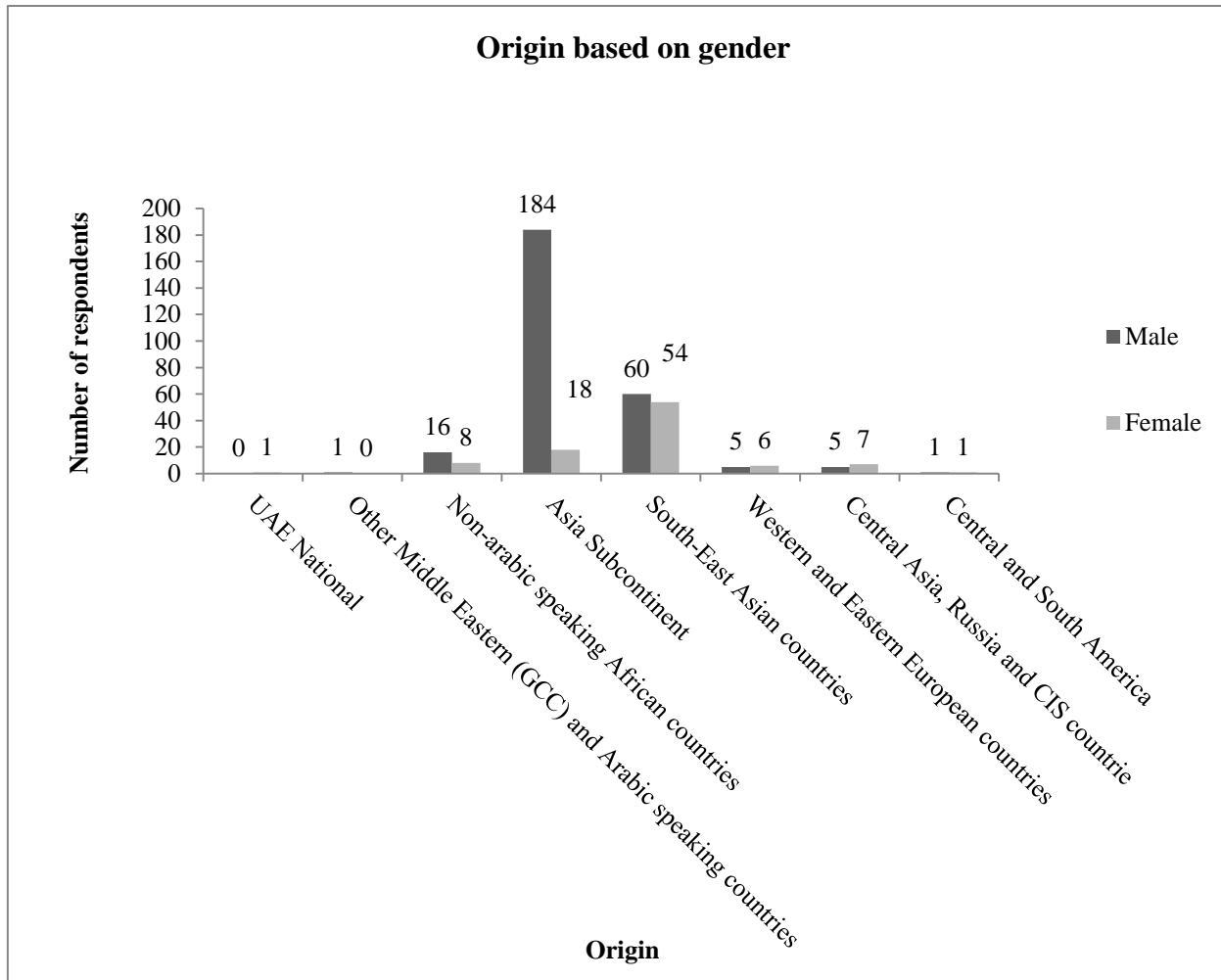
Respondents were asked to identify their country of origin in order to identify the degree of diversity amongst front-line employees.

**Table 5.2: Origin of respondents.**

<b>ORIGIN</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Asia Subcontinent	202	55.0
South East Asian countries	114	31.1
Non-Arabic speaking African countries	24	6.5
Central Asia, Russia and CIS countries	12	3.3
Western and Eastern European countries	11	3.0
Central and South America	2	0.5
U.A.E. National	1	0.3
Other Middle Eastern (GCC) and Arabic speaking countries	1	0.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>100</b>

In terms of country of origin the largest group was from the Asia Subcontinent at 55% (n=202) followed by South East Asian at 31.1% (n=114). Interestingly enough the two groups with lowest representation were U.A.E. Nationals who accounted for 0.3% (n=1) and Other Middle Eastern (GCC) and Arabic speaking countries at 0.3% (n=1). The findings reflect on the origin of front-line employees forming part of diverse workforce and a reflection on the lack of U.A.E. Nationals employed in lower levels occupations within the hotel sector.

**Figure 5.3: Origin of respondents based on gender.**



The above figure illustrates that the majority of male front-line employees are from the Asian Subcontinent (n=184) and females are mainly from South-East Asian countries (n=54) in line with the population of migrant labour force within the private sector of Dubai.

#### **5.4.4. Native language.**

The origin of the respondents shows the diverse workforce that is employed by hotels in Dubai and the fact that the international language ‘English’ is used commercially instead of ‘Arabic’ which is the official language of the U.A.E. The following table demonstrates the native language of the respondents.

**Table 5.3a: Respondents' native language.**

<b>LANGUAGE</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Hindi	87	23.7
Filipino	78	21.3
Nepali	29	7.9
English	28	7.6
Malay	19	5.1
Burmese	18	4.9
Russian	12	3.3
Tamil	12	3.3
Sinhala	12	3.3
Urdu	11	3.0
Mandarin	6	1.6
French	3	0.8
Arabic	2	0.5
German	2	0.5
Spanish	2	0.5
Italian	1	0.3
Other- specified	45	12.26
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>100</b>

As expected based on the origin of the respondents Hindi is the native language at 23.7% (n=87), followed by 21.3% (n=78) been Filipino, followed by Nepali at 7.9% (n=29), followed by English at 7.6% (n=28) with interestingly enough only .5% (n=2) Arabic native speakers. In terms of the respondents' native language, 45% have specified other as their native language, which is illustrated in the table below.

**Table 5.3b: Other - Respondents' native language.**

<b>LANGUAGE</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Konkani	9	20
Swahili	7	15.5
Bengali	5	11.1
Romanian	5	11.1
Bahasa	3	6.6
Creole	2	4.4
Srilankan	1	2.2
Uzbek	1	2.2
Telugu	1	2.2
Amharic	1	2.2
Vietnamese	1	2.2
Marathi	1	2.2
Japanese	1	2.2
Luo	1	2.2
Thai	1	2.2
Kiswahili	1	2.2
Chinese	1	2.2
Polish	1	2.2
Shona	1	2.2
Tagalog	1	2.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>

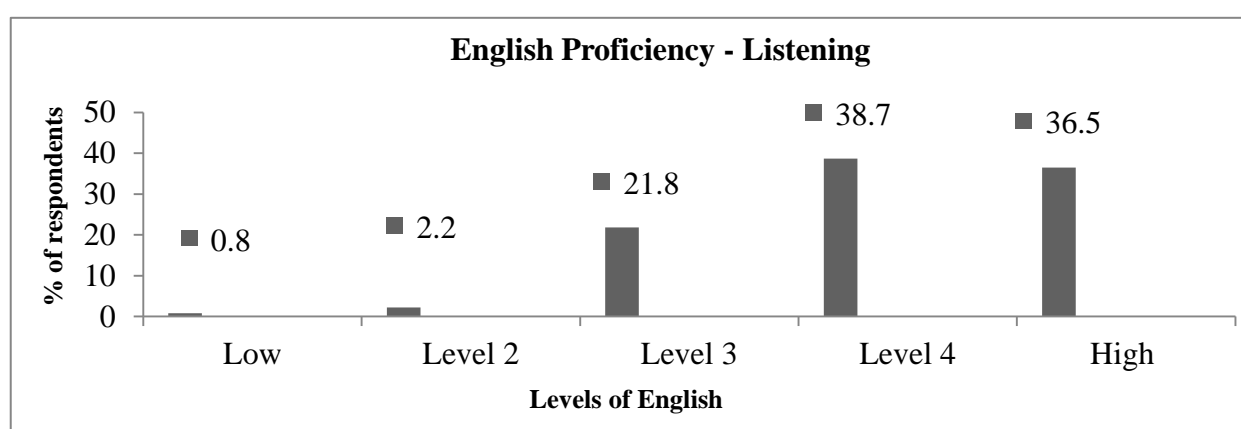
#### **5.4.5. Proficiency in English.**

Commercially English remains the most dominant language of communication and it is emphasized by the fact that trainings delivered in the hotels are in English. Therefore, it is of great importance to identify the level of English of the respondents since English is not their native language. To identify the level of English proficiency the respondents were asked to rate themselves for 1 being the lowest to 5 being the highest in terms of their listening; speaking; reading and writing skills. The levels of English are based on the following criteria 1- Elementary level of English; 2- Low intermediate level of English; 3- High intermediate

level of English; 4- Advanced level of English; and 5- Proficient level in English (<http://www.uefap.com/test/index.htm>).

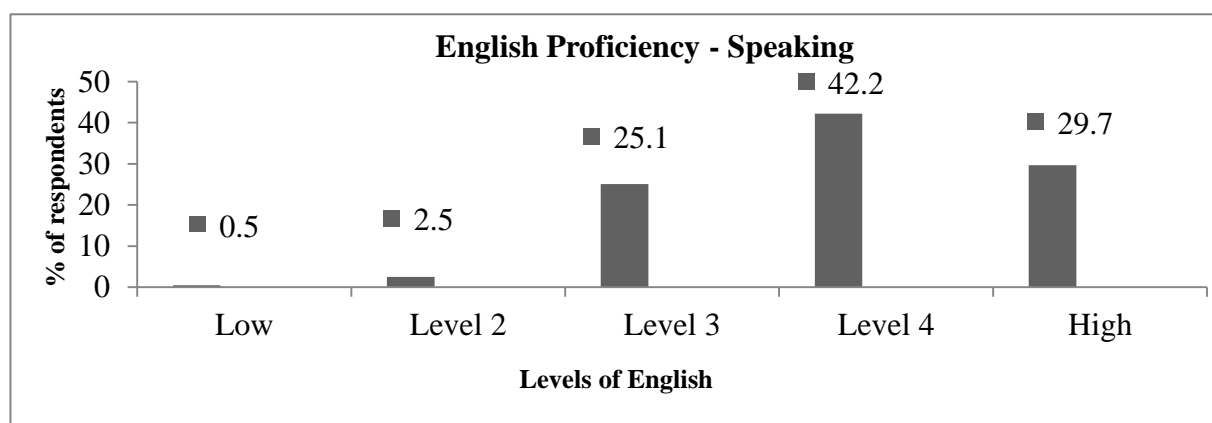
Proficiency in English is of great importance since this is the official language of communication in the hotels amongst employees, management, and customers. Either written or verbal communication ranging from customer interactions, SOPs, guidelines, formal and informal communication, trainings, appraisals and any other related activities are communicated in English to all hotel employees.

**Figure 5.4: Level of English proficiency – listening skills.**



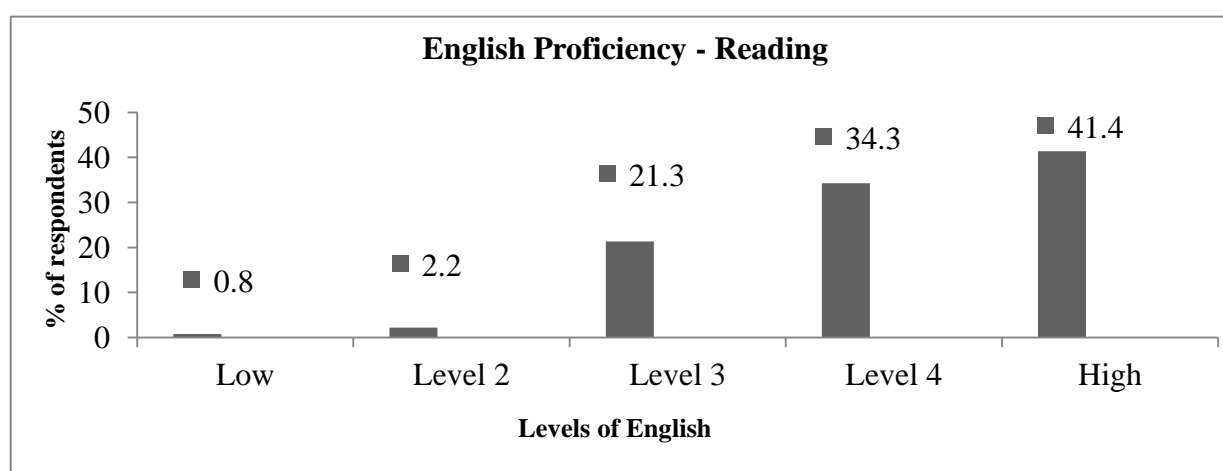
In terms of English Proficiency listening skills, 36.5% (n=134) are at the highest level, 38.7% (n=142) are at level 4, and 21.8% (n=80) are at level 3. However, only 2.2% (n=8) are at level 2 and another 0.8% (n=3) are at level 1. The above findings illustrate that over 2/3 of respondents have very good English listening skills.

**Figure 5.5: Level of English proficiency – speaking skills.**



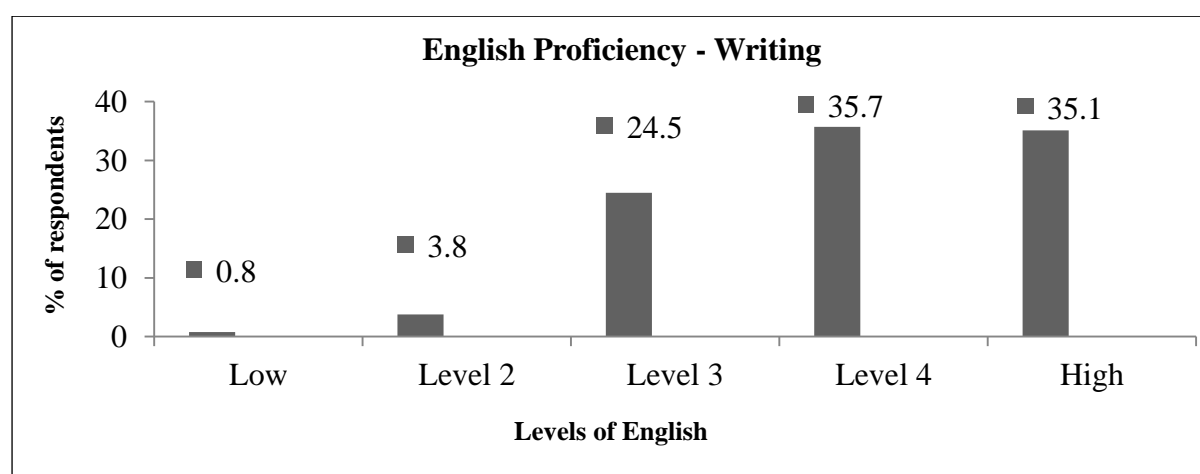
Similar results were identified regarding their English Proficiency speaking skills, 29.7% (n=109) rating themselves as proficient, 42.2% (n=155) rating at advanced level of English, 25.2% (n=92) rating themselves at high intermediate level of English, 2.5% (n=9) at low intermediate level of English, and 0.5% (n=2) at elementary level of English.

**Figure 5.6: Level of English proficiency – reading skills.**



In regards to English Proficiency in reading the majority of respondents representing 41.4% (n=152) are at high level, followed by 34.3% (n=126) at level 4, followed by level 3 at 21.3% (n=78), with lowest being levels 2 and 1, with 2.2% (n=8) and 0.8% (n=3) respectively.

**Figure 5.7: Level of English proficiency – writing skills.**



In regards to English Proficiency in writing 35.1% (n=129) are at high level, 35.7% (n=131) are at level 4, then 24.5% (n=90) at level 3, and 3.8% (n=14) at level 2, and only 0.8% (n=3) at low level.

#### 5.4.6. Education.

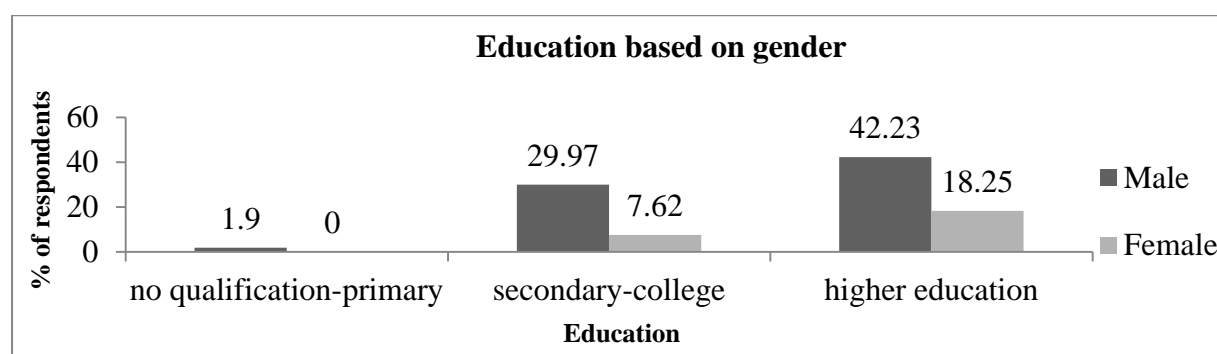
The respondents were asked to identify their highest attained qualification in order to identify their level of education.

**Table 5.4: Highest qualification attained.**

QUALIFICATION	N	Percentage
No qualification	1	.3
Primary School	6	1.6
Secondary School	57	15.5
Some college credit, but less than a year	17	4.6
1 or more years of college, no degree (incomplete)	64	17.4
Higher National Certificate	21	5.7
Higher National Diploma	41	11.2
Bachelor's Degree	140	38.1
Master's Degree	14	3.8
Professional Degree	6	1.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>100</b>

In regards to the respondents educational level the majority of respondents 38.1% (n=140), have a Bachelor's Degree and only 0.3% (n=1) of respondents do not hold any qualification at all. Overall, 60.4% (n=222) have some of educational qualification emphasizing that front-line employees are indeed educated.

**Figure 5.8: Highest attained qualification based on gender.**



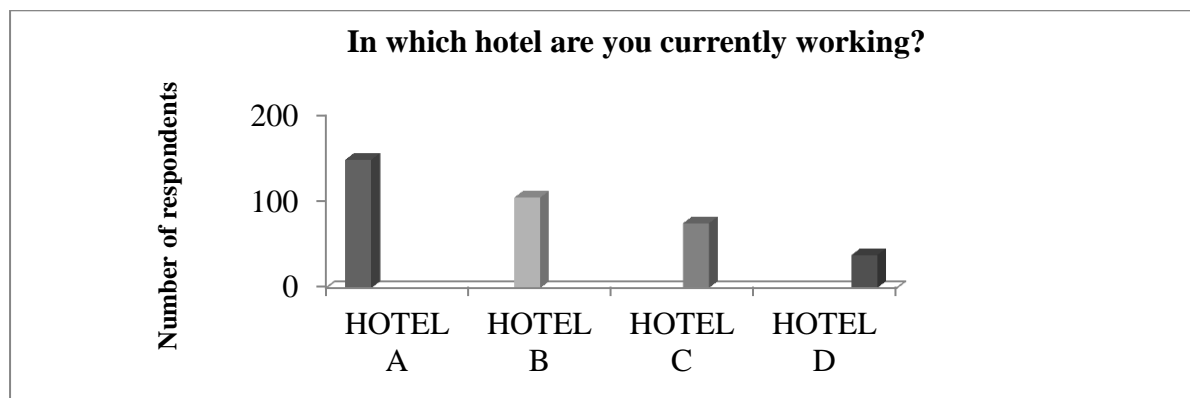


The above graph illustrates that 42.23% (n=155) male employees have a higher educational qualification and 18.24% (n=67) females have also attained some sort of higher educational qualification.

#### 5.4.7. Place of employment.

Respondents were asked to indicate which hotel property they were working in, so to ensure that a representative sample for each unit is included.

**Figure 5.9: Hotels where respondents are currently working.**

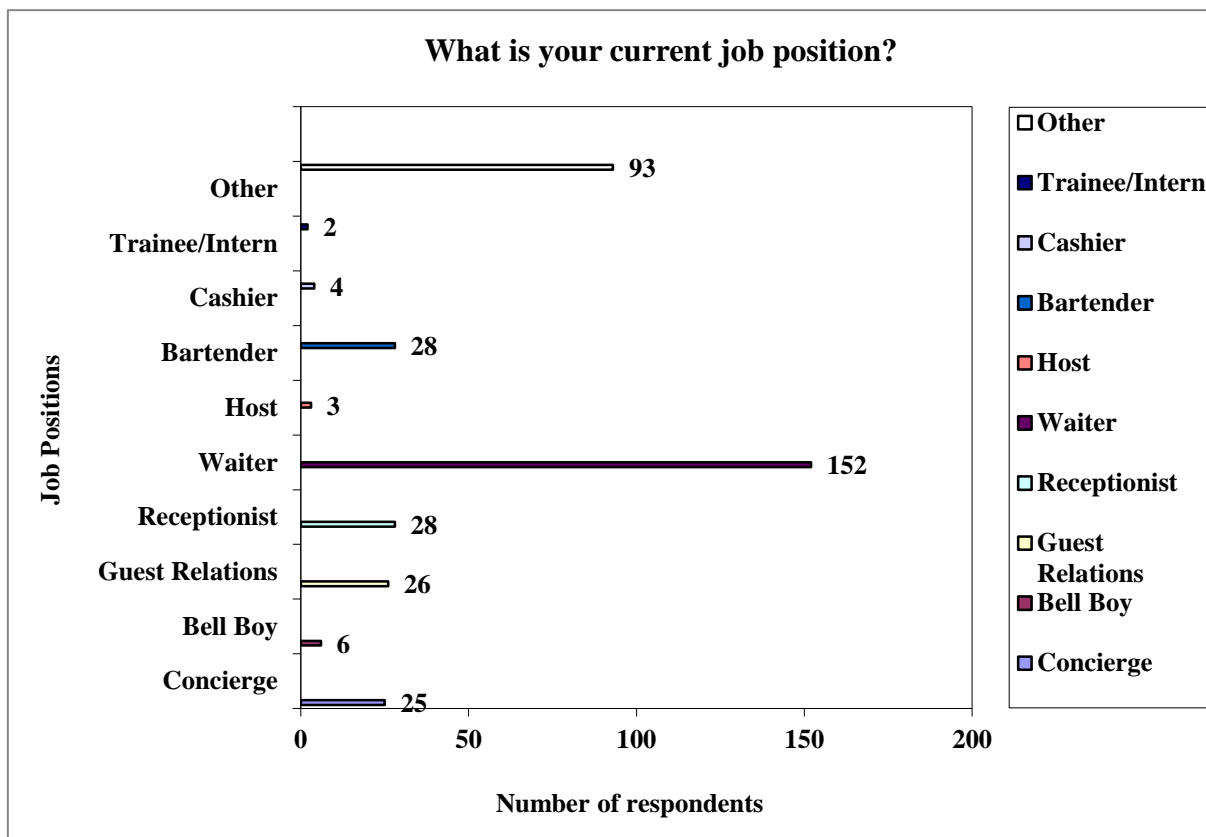


When respondents were asked in which hotel they are currently working 40.6% (n=149) are working at Hotel A, 28.6% (n=105) are working at Hotel B, 20.4% (n=75) are working at Hotel C, and 10.4% (n=38) are working at Hotel D. The only reason that influenced Hotel's A respondent's representation is due to the fact that the researcher spent more time in the staff canteen of that hotel in comparison with the others. Otherwise, no other apparent reason can justify the above findings since the hotels have similar number of front-line employees.

#### 5.4.8. Current job position.

Respondents were asked to identify their current job position within the two selected departments.

**Figure 5.10: Current job position of respondents.**



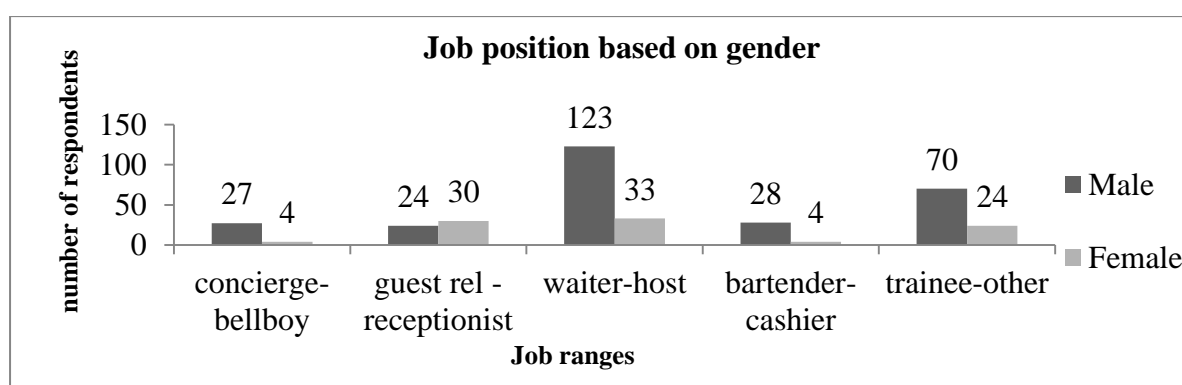
In regards to their current position 41.4% (n=152) are employed as waiters, followed by 25.3% (n=93) who are employed in other positions, followed by bartenders 7.62% (n=28) and receptionists with 7.62% (n=28). The reason as to why there is such a high representation from the F&B front-line employees is due to the numerous outlets that each hotel has on its premises. All of the above jobs have a common characteristic, which are direct interactions between front-line employees and customers. Despite the department or job function, all front-line employees are directly and closely responsible for satisfying customers' needs by delivering high customer service in a five star luxury environment.

**Table 5.5: Other - Current job position of respondents.**

<b>JOB POSITIONS (OTHER)</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Butler	47	50.5
Team Leader	14	15.0
F&B Team leader	13	13.9
Transportation (buggy/cars/abra)	12	12.9
Guest service Executive	3	3.2
Room Co-ordinator	1	1
Kids club	1	1
Room controller	1	1
Sommelier	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table illustrates that 50.5 % (n=47) of respondents were butlers emphasizing that the hotels provide very personalized service to their guests as to be expected in five star properties in Dubai. Interestingly enough transportation comes under Rooms and it refers to buggy drivers in the hotels, abra drivers (i.e. a traditional Arabic boat made of wood) transferring guests from one hotel to the other, and drivers for the executive cars and limousines such as luxurious Rolls Royce.

**Figure 5.11: Current job position of respondents based on gender.**



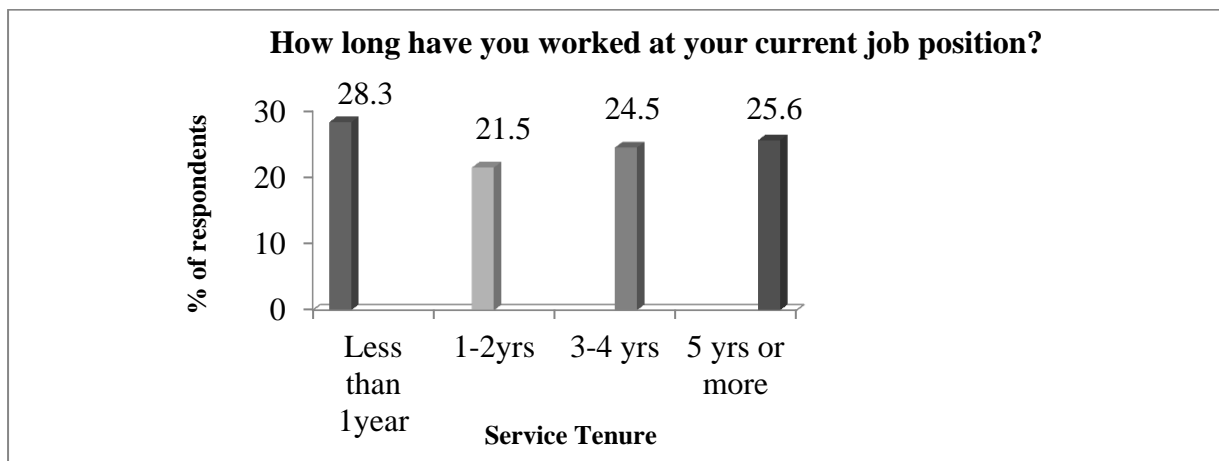
The above graph illustrates the job position hold based on their gender. After merging the 10 positions into five, the findings showed that predominantly 33.5% (n=123) males are employed as waiters-hosts and 8.99% (n=33) females are also employed as waitresses and

hostesses. In this study, we tend to see that the workforce of front-line employees is male dominant emphasizing the gender imbalance of the workforce within hotels.

#### 5.4.9. Length of service.

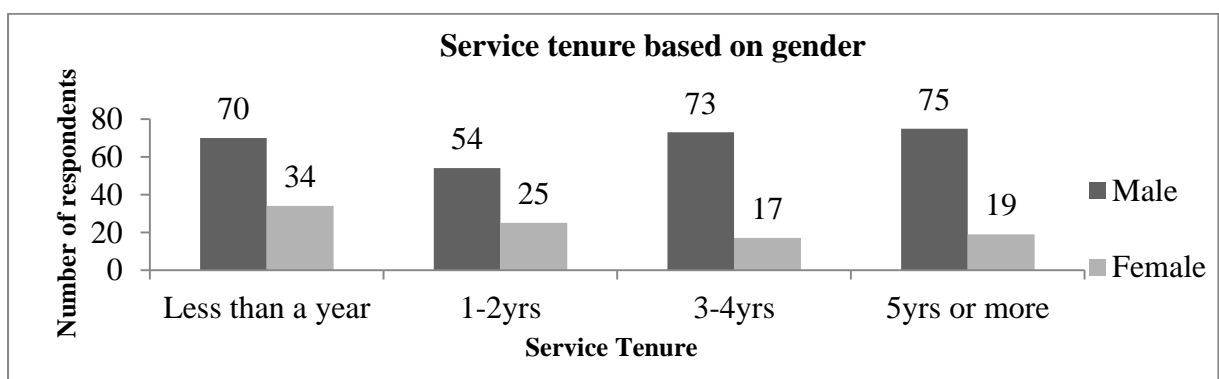
The respondents were asked to indicate their service tenure within that department so to identify length of time employed in their current position.

**Figure 5.12: Length of time worked in current job position.**



The respondents have been in their current job position an average of less than a year represented by 28.3% (n=104). Then 5 years or more long service employees at 25.6% (n=94), followed by 3 to 4 years at 24.5% (n=90) and between 1-2 years at 21.5% (n=79). The findings show that even though there is a high turnover due to the high percentage of employees with less than one of tenure still there is high representation of employees with 5 years or more reflecting on their loyalty to the company.

**Figure 5.13: Length of time worked in current job position based on gender.**

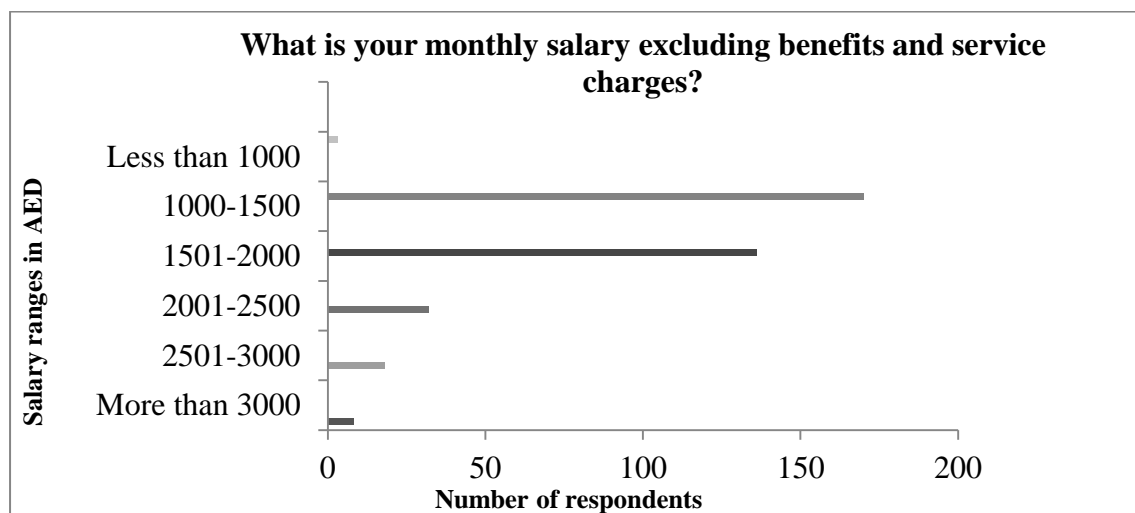


The above graph illustrates the highest number being males (n=75) who have been in their current job position 5 years or more and females (n=19), whereas the highest number of females (n=34) have been employed in their current job position for less than a year and males (n=70).

#### 5.4.10. Remuneration.

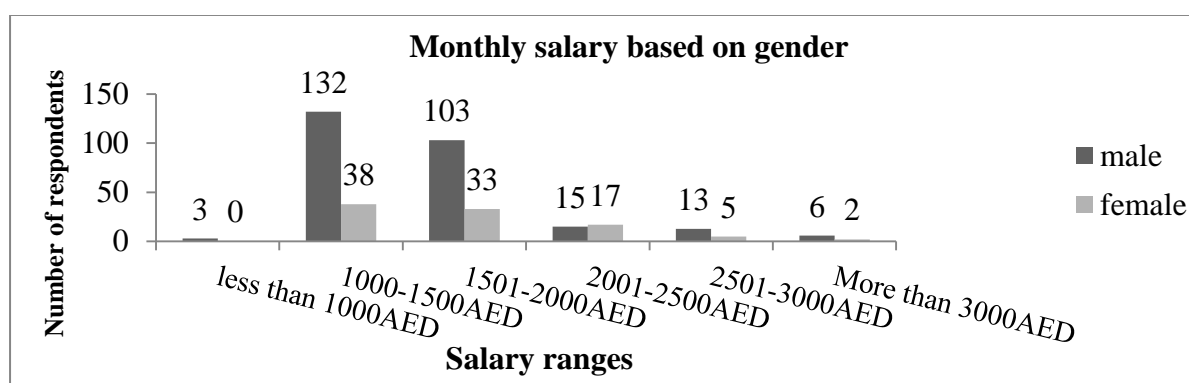
Respondents were asked about their monthly salary in order to identify the salaries of front-line employees in five star hotels in Dubai.

**Figure 5.14: Monthly salary.**



The salary ranges were grouped into six categories with highest being salary range between 1000 to 1500 AED at 46.3% (n=170), followed by salary range of 1501 to 2000AED at 37.1% (n=136) and least earnings less than 1000 AED at .8% (n=3) followed by salary range of more than 3000 AED at 2.2% (n=8). To compare the value of salaries based on the exchange rate (1£=5.5AED in February 2012) the above findings demonstrate that 46.3% of the respondents earn £182 to £272 monthly, 37.1% earn between £273 to £363 and only 2.2% of respondents are earning more than £545.

**Figure 5.15: Monthly salary based on gender.**



The above figure illustrates that the highest tax free salary earnings represented by 35.97% (n=132) of male respondents and 10.35% (n=38) of female respondents are paid between 1000-1500AED equivalent to £181-£272 on a monthly basis excluding benefits.

#### **5.4.11. Summary of employee profile.**

Front line employees can be described as personnel who have dedicated tasks and functions to perform, who are in direct daily contact with customers, usually new entrants into the labour force, and require moderately skill training to commence a job within the hotel industry with a lot of learning being ‘on-the job’ (Pollock and Ritchie, 1990). Based on the findings, out of 367 respondents in five star hotels in Dubai, U.A.E. 64.8% are between 25-34 years old, 55% are from the Asia Subcontinent followed by 31.1% from South East Asian countries, the main native language accounting for 23.7% is Hindi, followed by 21.3% whose native language is Filipino, the majority of respondents perceived their English Proficiency to be between level 4 (advanced) or level 5 (proficient), 60.49% have a higher educational qualification, 41.68% of respondents worked in the F&B department as waiters/waitresses, 28.3% have less than a year service tenure and 46.3% of the respondents earn between 1000-1500 AED equivalent to £181-£272 as a monthly salary. As the study shows there is a vast diversity of workforce within the hotels in Dubai, U.A.E. Hence, the importance of training front-line employees is not only an organisational commitment but a management commitment too towards the individuals. As a result employees can increase their knowledge, skills, and abilities ending in numerous benefits for all parties involved; the front-line employee, the organisation; the success of the business, and customer satisfaction (Sanders, Oomens, Blonk, and Hazelzet, 2011; Smith, 2002; Choi and Dickson, 2010). A number of variables have been chosen to measure the real commitment towards training and

benefits as perceived by front-line employees that will be analysed in the following section of this study.

## **5.5. TRAINING OF FRONT-LINE EMPLOYEES.**

Despite the fact that employees represent the most valuable asset of a company, it is proven that the hospitality industry has a poor image when it relates to its training activities for the development of skills and competencies of its low skilled workforce (Asplund and Salverda, 2004; Barron, 2008; Poulston, 2008). In order to overcome this problem corporate thinking should recognise that training and development are crucial in changing the organisations so they are better equipped to face challenges from their competitors (Westhead, 1998) and improve competitiveness (Barron, 2008). Commitment is also another factor that corporate thinking should engage with. The fulfilment of needs from its internal customers (employees) through the provision of internal products or services (training) to satisfy their expectations and contribute towards the attainment of corporate short and long-term goals, organisations performance, and shareholder value (Nikandrou *et al.*, 2008; Westhead, 1998). Organisations should think of employee development, succession planning, and talent management as part of their strategic training and development activities which are closely related to human resources activities and adopt proper guidelines in regards to how they source, attract, select, train, develop, promote and move employees up the ladder within the organisation (Barron, 2008; Noe *et al.*, 2008). In addition, training affects positively job satisfaction, productivity, wages and incentives (Au *et al.*, 2008), readiness for promotions, update of skills, decrease of leaning periods of employees, innovation, increase quality of work, organisational commitment, and hence staff retention (Aksu, 2005; Chiang *et al.*, 2005).

There are numerous reasons that can explain why this poor reputation over training in the hospitality industry has been developed over the years. It is mainly because managers and organisations may be reluctant to invest in training so it is often under-funded due to high levels of turnover or because management time is already occupied with other business activities (Davies *et al.*, 2001).

Other barriers could be linked to the resources such as the time and high cost of training which are upfront and evident whereas the benefits appear to be isolated and immeasurable (Clements & Josiam, 1995). Moreover, scholars in terms of the value of training are discussing other values, such as the distance between the workplace and the training site, and

the inappropriateness of the training to company needs (Giffard *et al.*, 2001). Moreover, the inability to provide adequate cover for those on training leave, and the fear that once employees acquire the new knowledge, skills, and abilities might leave to work for another organisation (Blake *et al.*, 2006). However, poor training reflects on insufficient skills by the workforce, which in turn affects negative the service delivery to customers (Poulston, 2008).

Hotels that offer inadequate training aggravate staff turnover and threaten quality of standards (Sheldon & Gee, 1987), profit and company performance (Lashley & Thomas, 2008). On the contrary, managers who make concentrated efforts in their employment strategies, including career development are being proactive resulting into high employee satisfaction (Wildes, 2005). It is evident though that the provision of training is higher in larger organisations than smaller ones so to improve communication, to reduce monitoring costs, and to manage effectively employees (Westhead, 1998). So what is the real situation in five star hotels in Dubai, U.A.E in relation to training and development opportunities of front-line employees?

The following section will answer the following questions:

- Is there a strong and positive corporate belief and support towards the HCI for its front-line employees?
- What the perceptions of front-line employees' are in regards to the different types of training provided for them by the organisation?
- Do managers fully support the training activities within the organisation?
- What do front-line employees feel about the assistance and backing of their direct managers' regarding training activities?
- What is the level of satisfaction of front-line employees with the training environment?
- Which benefits do front-line employees achieve as a result of training?
- What types of programmes have been offered to front-line employees?
- Which instructional methods do facilitators used during the training session?
- Overall, how many hours of training front-line employees receive and who finances their training?

#### **5.5.1. Organisational support towards training.**

In order to be successful in the present economic environment, organisations must demonstrate a commitment to assist front-line employees to learn and develop new skills



(Crick & Spencer, 2010; Lee & Bruvold, 2003) and training needs must form part of the strategic plans of the organisation (Nikandrou *et al.*, 2008). Therefore, all employees should be given training either new or existing employees. Training is perceived as a process of transmitting knowledge where employees can learn their job from more experienced co-workers known as on-the-job training, and/or attitudes and behaviour from the organization to employees so employees can perform at a desirable level. An organization's perception of investment in training starts by looking into the tasks that individuals have to perform under the desired level, identifying the need for training (cause), investing in training (tool,) overcome the training need (effect), so to demonstrate the actual desired performance of the individual as required by the organization (Bras & Rodrigues, 2007). As a result, training should have an immediate and specific impact on employees' work performance and be solicited on requirements of the organisation and its distinctive corporate culture. Consequently, training is associated with employee development and employability for future roles in work and life (Dubois & Rothwell, 2004).

The second part of the survey relates to organisational support towards training. Training methods are categorized by the place where they are performed: off the job and on-the-job mainly (Rodríguez & Gregory, 2005). Respondents were asked to rank six variables from strongly agree to strongly disagree on how good the organisation is providing different types of training such as induction; technical/professional skills training; off-the-job training; on-the-job training; and cross training.

Likert scale summated rating with interval data was used to evaluate their level of agreement with 5=strongly agree, 4= agree, 3=neutral, 2=disagree and 1=strongly disagree.

**Table 5.6: Respondents' perceptions of organisational support for training.**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>St. Deviation</b>	<b>Rank</b>
My organisation provides its employees with <i>good induction training</i> .	<b>4.27</b>	.784	<b>1</b>
My organisation provides its employees with <i>good cross training</i> (e.g. training given to employees in different job roles or different departments).	<b>4.10</b>	.883	<b>2</b>
My organisation provides its employees with <i>good technical/ professional skills training</i> .	4.08	.844	3
My organisation provides its employees with <i>good on-the-job training</i> (e.g. training given to employees at their work place).	4.06	.851	4
My organisation provides its employees with <i>good off the job training</i> (e.g. training given to employees away from their work place such as at a college or school).	<b>3.58</b>	1.033	<b>5</b>

Source: Questionnaire n=367

Note: Scale: 5=strongly agree to 1=strongly disagree

The above table demonstrates that since the means are higher than 3, respondents recognise that the organisation provides good training, particularly induction facilitating employees' socialization process and introducing the corporate culture, as well as cross training which assists employees master new jobs or new job skills. One possible area for improvement could be off-the-job training; however, this is still a satisfactory score.

**Table 5.7: Organisational provision of different types of training.**

	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
My organisation provides its employees with <i>good induction training</i> .	160	43.6	161	43.9	37	10.1	5	1.4	4	1.1
My organisation provides its employees with <i>good cross training</i> (e.g. training given to employees in different job roles or different departments).	135	36.8	160	43.6	56	15.3	9	2.5	7	1.9
My organisation provides its employees with <i>good technical/professional skills training</i> .	121	33	178	48.5	53	14.4	9	2.5	6	1.6
My organisation provides its employees with <i>good on-the-job training</i> (e.g. training given to employees at their work place).	120	32.7	170	46.3	62	16.9	10	2.7	5	1.4
My organisation provides its employees with <i>good off the job training</i> (e.g. training given to employees away from their work place such as at a college or school).	73	19.9	136	37.1	104	28.3	104	28.3	12	3.3

Source: Questionnaire n=367      Note: Scale: 5= strongly agree to 1= strongly disagree

The above table shows the level of agreement of respondents with the different types of training offered by the organisation. As per the results, overall there is a high level of satisfaction with the provision of different types of training. It is evident that 43.6% (n=160) strongly agree that the organisation offers good induction training, and 36.8% (n=135) of respondents strongly agree that the organisation provides good cross training. However, only 19.9% (n=73) of respondents strongly agree with the provision of off-the-job training, so maybe this is an area that the organisation should further improve.

### **5.5.2. Supervisors and managers support towards training.**

Organisational support towards training can be perceived as an organisational investment towards the individual, an organisation that cares and as a result enhance employees' commitment towards the organization (Bulut & Culha, 2010). However, management support is also crucial since they are the decision makers who allow employees to attend organisational training and they are the ones who represent the organisational culture for their subordinates (Chiaburu & Tekleab, 2005). Managers are the decision makers who can assign employees to attend training programmes based on their performance or employees' individual needs. Therefore, discussion of training needs and the value of training is crucial which will reflect on employees attachment to the organisation due to the support received from their supervisors or senior management (Bulut & Culha, 2010). Managers play important roles trying to motivate employees attend training programmes. This might happen only when managers have a strong belief of the programmes' usefulness and the impact the acquired knowledge of the training programmes have on employees' performance. In addition, it is demonstrated that managers who provide support for employees ensure the full participation and completion of training programmes by employees (Chiaburu & Tekleab, 2005). On the other hand, despite the recognition that training is useful, management does not always support the training programmes and set obstacles to individuals such as not allowing employees to take time off to undertake study or even to participate in group interactions (McColl-Kennedy & White, 1997). Managers often convey worries over training's significance, costs, trustworthiness and usefulness and fail to understand their own accountabilities (Banfield & Kay, 2008).

The third part of the survey relates to management support towards training. Respondents were asked to rank the statements from very satisfied to very dissatisfied to identify their level of satisfaction with their supervisors/managers support towards their own personal training, learning and development needs.

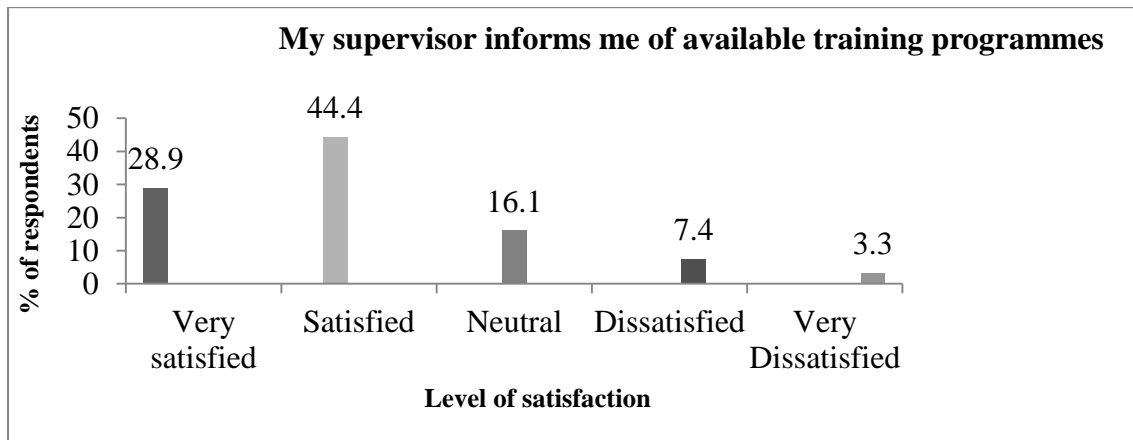
**Table 5.8: Respondents' perceptions of supervisory and management support for training.**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>St. Deviation</b>	<b>Rank</b>
My supervisor <i>informs</i> me of available <i>training programmes</i> .	367	<b>3.88</b>	1.013	<b>1</b>
My supervisor <i>encourages and supports</i> me to take part in training and development opportunities.	367	<b>3.84</b>	1.025	<b>2</b>
My supervisor <i>reviews my progress</i> and <i>provides</i> me with <i>feedback</i> .	367	3.76	1.037	3
My supervisor <i>coaches and guides</i> me effectively.	367	3.72	1.070	4
My supervisor regularly <i>discusses my personal training and development needs</i> with me.	367	3.70	1.044	5
My supervisor <i>jointly sets tasks and development goals</i> with me.	367	<b>3.65</b>	1.043	<b>6</b>

Source: Questionnaire n=367      Note: Scale: 5=strongly satisfied to 1=strongly dissatisfied

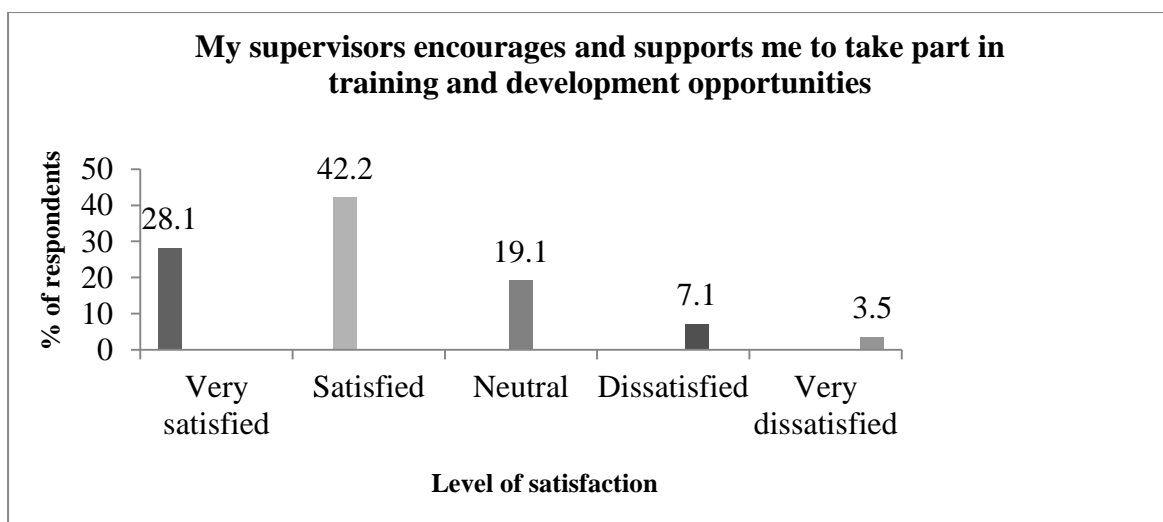
The above table shows the relevant mean, standard deviation and rank of each attribute in a descending order. It is apparent that the most frequent variable employees are satisfied with is “My supervisor informs me of available training programmes” (M=3.88, SD=1.013) followed by “My supervisor encourages and supports me to take part in training and development opportunities” (M=3.84, SD=1.025). Least satisfied with sixth rank is “My supervisor jointly sets tasks and development goals with me” (M=3.65, SD=1.043). For all the factors related to management support towards training, since the means are higher than 3, employees expressed high levels of satisfaction with the activities of supervisors/managers towards their personal training, learning and development needs.

**Figure 5.16: Supervisory/management communication of available training programmes.**



In regards to the communication of available programmes 44.4% (n=163) of the respondents are satisfied; 28.9% (n=106) are very satisfied; 16.1% (N=59) are neutral; 7.4% (n=27) are dissatisfied and 3.3% (n=12) are very dissatisfied. High levels of satisfaction are evident from the respondents referring to the communication of available programmes to them.

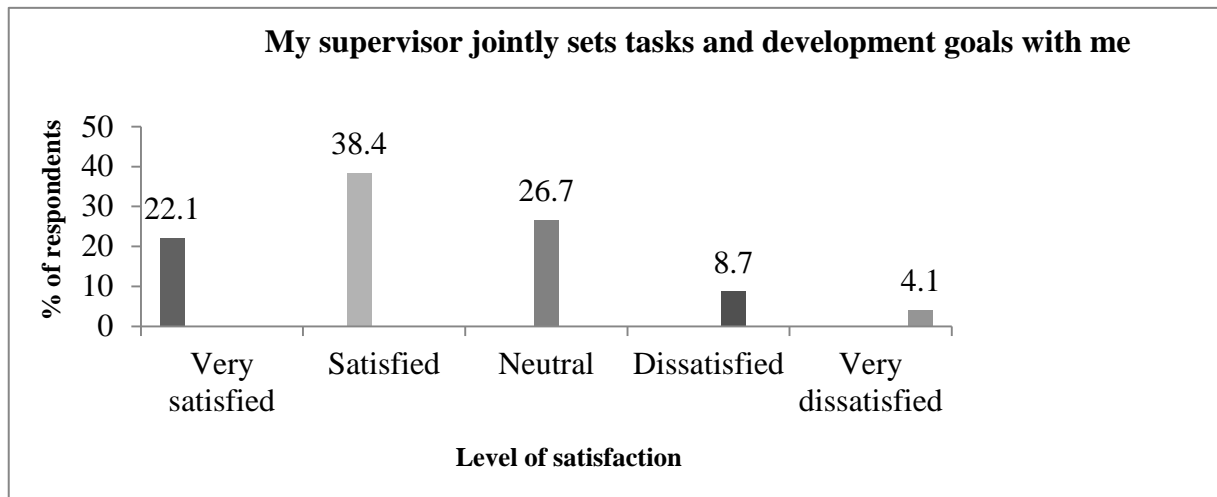
**Figure 5.17: Supervisory/management encouragement in employees' participation in training and development opportunities.**



The above bar chart shows the level of satisfaction in regards to the encouragement and support of supervisors towards employees' participation in training and development opportunities. Out of 367 respondents, 42.2% (n=155) of the respondents are satisfied; 28.1% (n=103) are very satisfied; 19.1% (n=70) are neutral; 7.1% (n=26) are dissatisfied and 3.5% (n=13) are very dissatisfied. Overall, there is a high tendency of satisfaction with the

encouragement and support provided by supervisors towards employee's participation in training and development opportunities.

**Figure 5.18: Supervisory/management set up of tasks and development goals with front line employees.**



The above bar chart ranked on the sixth place demonstrates the level of employee satisfaction towards the jointly set up of tasks and development goals. Out of the 367 respondents; 38.4% (n=141) are satisfied; 26.7% (n=98) are neutral; 22.1% (n=81) are very satisfied; 8.7% (n=32) are dissatisfied and 4.1% (n=15) are very dissatisfied. As a whole despite having, the lowest ranking the results show a positive level of satisfaction regarding the set-up of individuals' tasks and development goals.

### **5.5.3. Adequacy of training facilities and services.**

The training environment consists of the available resources to enable a training plan to be implemented including the venue for running programmes either internal or external in nature, equipment, programme materials used to deliver the programmes, staff expertise in ways of delivering and money (Reid & Barrington, 1999; Siddons, 2003).

The fourth part of the survey relates to the adequacy of training facilities and services. Participants were asked to rank the statements from very satisfied to very dissatisfied to identify their level of satisfaction with the adequacy of training facilities, services, and training offered by the organisation.

**Table 5.9: Respondents' perceptions of the adequacy of training facilities and services.**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>St. Deviation</b>	<b>Rank</b>
The <i>physical working conditions</i> in the room (e.g. AC, lighting, audio visual equipment).	367	<b>4.26</b>	.728	<b>1</b>
The <i>location</i> of the training facilities.	367	<b>4.22</b>	.738	<b>2</b>
The <i>training material</i> (e.g. handouts).	367	4.18	.712	3
The <i>quality of the training programmes</i> you have attended.	367	4.15	.756	4
The <i>trainers' knowledge and expertise</i> .	367	4.13	.724	5
The <i>food and beverage services</i>	367	<b>3.86</b>	.901	<b>6</b>

Source: Questionnaire n=367

Note: Scale: 5=strongly agree to 1=strongly disagree

The table above shows the relevant mean, standard deviation, and rank of each attribute in a descending order. It is evident that the most frequent variable employees are satisfied with is “The physical working conditions in the room (e.g. AC, lighting, audio visual equipment)” (M=4.26, SD=.728) followed by “The location of the training facilities” (M=4.22, SD=.738). Least satisfied with on sixth rank is “The food and beverage services” (M=3.86, SD=.901). Generally, most of the respondents showed a positive satisfaction towards the adequacy of the training environment including the facilities and services because all means for the factors are above 3.



**Table 5.10: Adequacy of training facilities and services.**

	Very satisfied		Satisfied		Neutral		Dissatisfied		Strongly dissatisfied	
	n	%	n	%	N	%	n	%	n	%
The <i>physical working conditions</i> in the room (e.g. AC, lighting, audio visual equipment).	148	40.3	180	49.0	31	8.4	6	1.6	2	0.5
The <i>location</i> of the training facilities.	135	36.8	192	52.3	29	7.9	9	2.5	2	0.5
The <i>training material</i> (e.g. handouts).	122	33.2	202	55.0	35	9.5	6	1.6	2	0.5
The <i>quality of the training programmes</i> you have attended.	117	31.9	205	55.9	33	9.0	8	2.2	4	1.1
The <i>trainers' knowledge and expertise</i> .	112	30.5	206	56.1	38	10.4	10	2.7	1	0.3
The <i>food and beverage services</i>	89	24.3	173	47.1	80	21.8	18	4.9	7	1.9

Source: Questionnaire n=367      Note: Scale: 5= very satisfied to 1= very dissatisfied

The above table shows the level of employees' satisfaction with the adequacy of the training venue, trainers' expertise, physical working conditions in the training rooms, equipment, distributed material and F&B facilities. Out of 367 respondents, 89.37% (n=328) said that they are very satisfied to satisfied with the physical working conditions in the training rooms. Followed by the location of the training facilities with 36.8% (n=135) being very satisfied and 33.2% (n=122) of respondents being very satisfied with the training material. However, lower scores were seen in regards to the F&B services offered to the trainees and it is because the trainers make no formal arrangements since the employees are expected to have their breaks at the staff canteen.

#### **5.5.4. Benefits of training to the individual employee.**

Benefits of training can be gained at an individual level and at an organisational level. Individual employees attending training can gain higher intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. For instance intrinsic job satisfaction may derive based on a well-done task, employee performance improvement and from the individual being able to transfer the acquired KSA into the workplace (Buckley & Caple, 2008). Employees' abilities, behaviour, and attitudes can affect both customer satisfaction and quality (Valera & García, 2006). Higher customer service quality delivered by employees can be outcomes of training programmes focusing on empowerment, multi-skilling, interpersonal skills, guest-service, quality and teamwork (Chartrungruang *et al.*, 2006) and motivation (Sahinidis & Bouris, 2008). Extrinsic job satisfaction can be reflected through extra earnings accrued due to improved performance and through the enhancement of career and promotion opportunities within the organisation, which leads to higher organisational commitment (Davies *et al.*, 2001).

So the fifth part of the survey relates to the benefits of training to the individuals. Respondents were asked to rank the statements from strongly agree to strongly disagree to indicate their level of agreement with the benefits resulted from trainings. Factors such as increase on competencies, improvement of performing tasks, increase in innovation, creativity levels and suggestions; increase on productivity; provision of higher customer service; increase in enthusiasm and happiness in the workplace; increase in confidence; motivation; job satisfaction; valued by the company; commitment; entitlement for rewards/incentives; readiness for promotion.

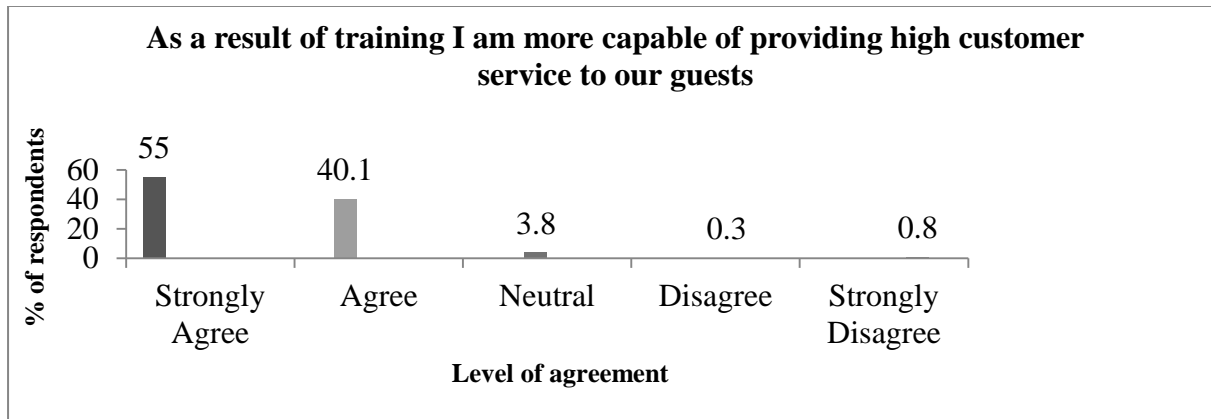
**Table 5.11: Respondents' perceptions of benefits as a result of training.**

<b>Variable</b> <b>“As a result of training...”</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>St.</b> <b>Deviation</b>	<b>Rank</b>
I am more capable of providing high <i>customer service</i> to our guests.	367	<b>4.48</b>	.664	<b>1</b>
I feel more <i>confident</i> at work.	367	<b>4.38</b>	.722	<b>2</b>
I am constantly <i>improving</i> and <i>doing things better</i> .	367	<b>4.35</b>	.682	<b>3</b>
I am more <i>productive</i> at work.	367	4.33	.673	4
I am more <i>competent</i> to perform my duties at the level of existing requirements.	367	4.29	.639	5
I am able to be more <i>innovative</i> , more <i>creative</i> and <i>suggestive</i> of new ideas.	367	4.23	.716	6
I am <i>ready</i> for a <i>promotion</i> .	367	4.23	.902	6
I feel <i>committed</i> to the organisation.	367	4.21	.761	7
I am more <i>enthusiastic</i> and <i>happy</i> in my workplace.	367	4.14	.917	8
I feel more <i>motivated</i> at work.	367	4.06	.899	9
I feel <i>valued</i> by the company.	367	4.05	.917	10
I feel <i>satisfied</i> with my job.	367	4.03	.927	11
I am <i>entitled</i> for a <i>reward/ incentive</i> .	367	<b>3.99</b>	.906	<b>12</b>

*Source: Questionnaire n=367      Scale: 5=strongly agree to 1=strongly disagree*

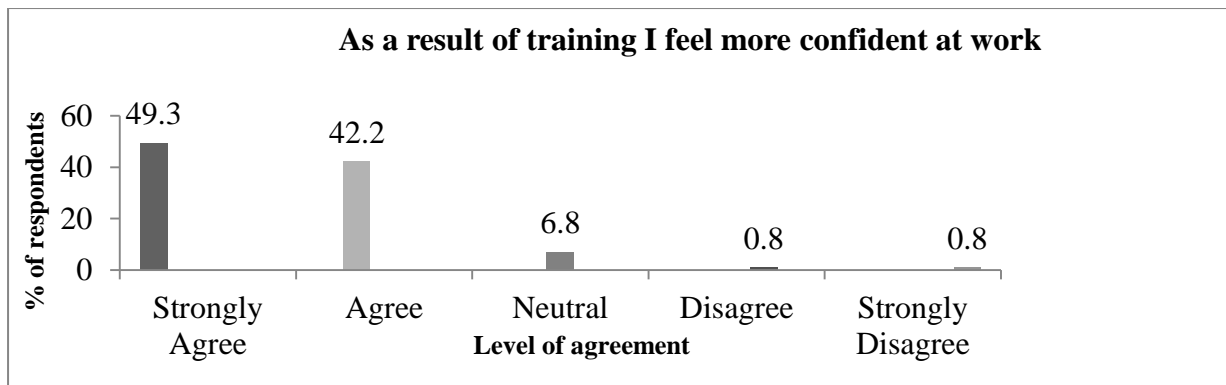
The above table illustrates the relevant mean, standard deviation, and rank of each attribute in a descending order. It is evident that the most frequent variable employees agree with is “As a result of training I am more capable of providing high customer service to our guests” (M=4.48, SD=.664) followed by “As a result of training I feel more confident at work” (M=4.38, SD= .722). Then ranking third “As a result of training I am constantly improving and doing things better” (M=4.35, SD=.682). Less frequent variable ranking is “As a result of training I am entitled for a reward/ incentive” (M=3.99, SD=.906). Overall, employees are satisfied with the perceived benefits as a result of training since all means of the factors are above 3.

**Figure 5.19: Impact of training in the provision of high customer service to guests.**



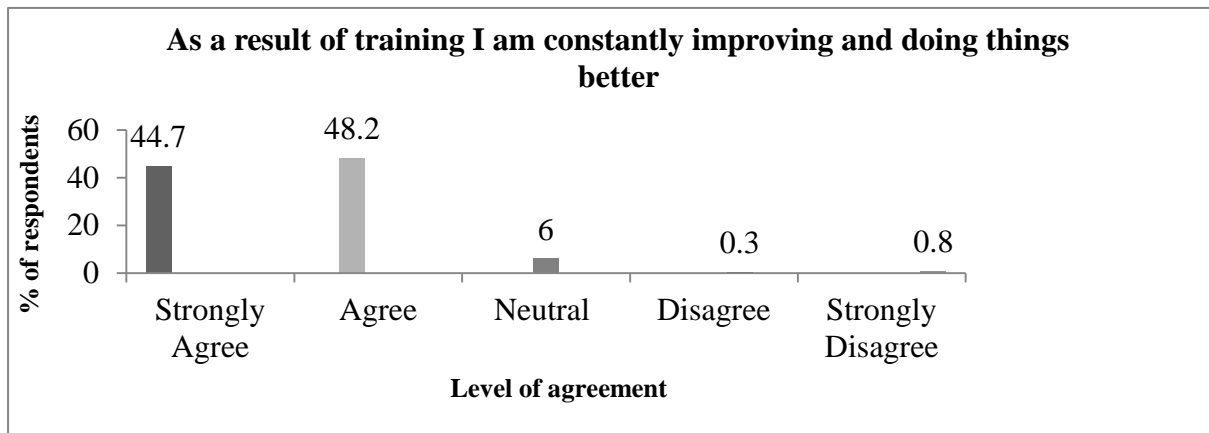
The above bar chart shows that out of 367 respondents, 55% (n=202) strongly agree that training has resulted in an increase on their capabilities to provide high customer service to guests; followed by 40.1% (n=147) of respondents who agree, 3.8% (n=14) are neutral, 0.3% disagree (n=1) and 0.8% (n=3) strongly disagree. With a first rank, it is evident that there is a high level of agreement with the fact that training has an impact on the provision of high customer service to guests.

**Figure 5.20: Impact of training in the increase of employees' confidence.**



The above bar chart illustrates that out of 367 respondents, 49.3% (n=181) strongly agree that training has resulted in an increase on their confidence levels at work; followed by 42.2% (n=155) who agree; 6.8% (n=25) are neutral, .8% (n=3) disagree and .8% (n=3) strongly disagree. Being second on the ranking, there is a high level of agreement by the respondents that training does boost up employees' confidence level.

**Figure 5.21: Impact of training in the improvement of employees' execution of tasks.**



The above bar chart demonstrates that out of 367 respondents, 48.2% (n=177) agree that training has a positive effect on their constant improvement on doing things better, 44.7% (n=164) strongly agree, 6% (n=22) are neutral, 0.3% (n=1) disagree and 0.8% (n=3) strongly disagree. Overall, 92.9% (n=341) of the respondents agree that there is improvement on performing tasks due to training activities.

#### **5.5.5. Types of training employees have undertaken within the organisation.**

The content of training activity is considered as important when the success of the company is associated with the quality of human capital investment and the treatment of a company's training activity/expenditure as producing an asset to the firm (Brás & Rodrigues, 2007). Therefore, companies identify the types of training offered to employees based on general training; specific training and transferable training so to control the benefits associated with the company's return on investment (Brás & Rodrigues, 2007).

According to the study conducted by Pollock and Ritchie (1990) in which a framework was developed based on the different levels of employment within the tourism sector and strategies were advised for the design and delivery of training programmes in a more effective way. Their findings showed that the types of learning for front line employees fall under main areas including operational skills; attitude/service; product knowledge; corporate policies/procedures; and career paths. The main objectives are to equip employees with the skills necessary to perform the job effectively; to develop customer service skills and positive attitudes; to develop product knowledge and awareness and to develop career awareness. In order to achieve the objectives, the content of the training programmes should be linked to

customer service skills; product knowledge concerning local tourism attractions and services; ‘how to’ techniques used in the departments so to complete various tasks; and introduction to career opportunities. The format of delivery is mostly on-the-job conducted by supervisors. So what is it actually offered to front-line non managerial employees in five star hotels in Dubai, U.A.E.?

The sixth part of the survey refers to the training programmes. It looks into the purpose of the training programmes in regards to the topic area; the training techniques used to facilitate training programmes; the link of training programmes and employees’ personal development plan; the hours of in-house training monthly; and employees’ attendance and funding on any type of formal training outside their workplace.

The first question of the last part of the survey refers to the main purpose of training programmes. The respondents could select more than one answer based on a multiple choice multiple-response scale, if they have attended any training programmes relevant to task specific skills; to foreign languages; to familiarization of local culture, to development of customer service skills and positive attitudes; to development of product knowledge and awareness, to development of interpersonal skills and to development of career awareness.

**Table 5.12: Purpose of training programmes respondents have attended.**

Variable	Frequencies	Percentage
To develop <i>customer service skills and positive attitudes</i> (e.g. customer complaint handling)	242	65.9
To develop <i>product knowledge and awareness</i>	226	61.6
To equip employees with <i>task specific skills</i> necessary to perform the job effectively (e.g. cashiering, telephone skills)	211	57.5
To develop <i>career awareness</i>	191	52.0
To develop <i>team working skills</i>	172	46.9
To develop <i>interpersonal skills</i> (e.g. social skills)	129	35.1
To learn <i>foreign languages</i> (e.g. elementary level in Arabic, English, Chinese, Russian etc.)	106	28.9
To get familiar with the <i>local culture</i> (e.g. laws, customs & traditions of the Middle Eastern culture)	105	28.6

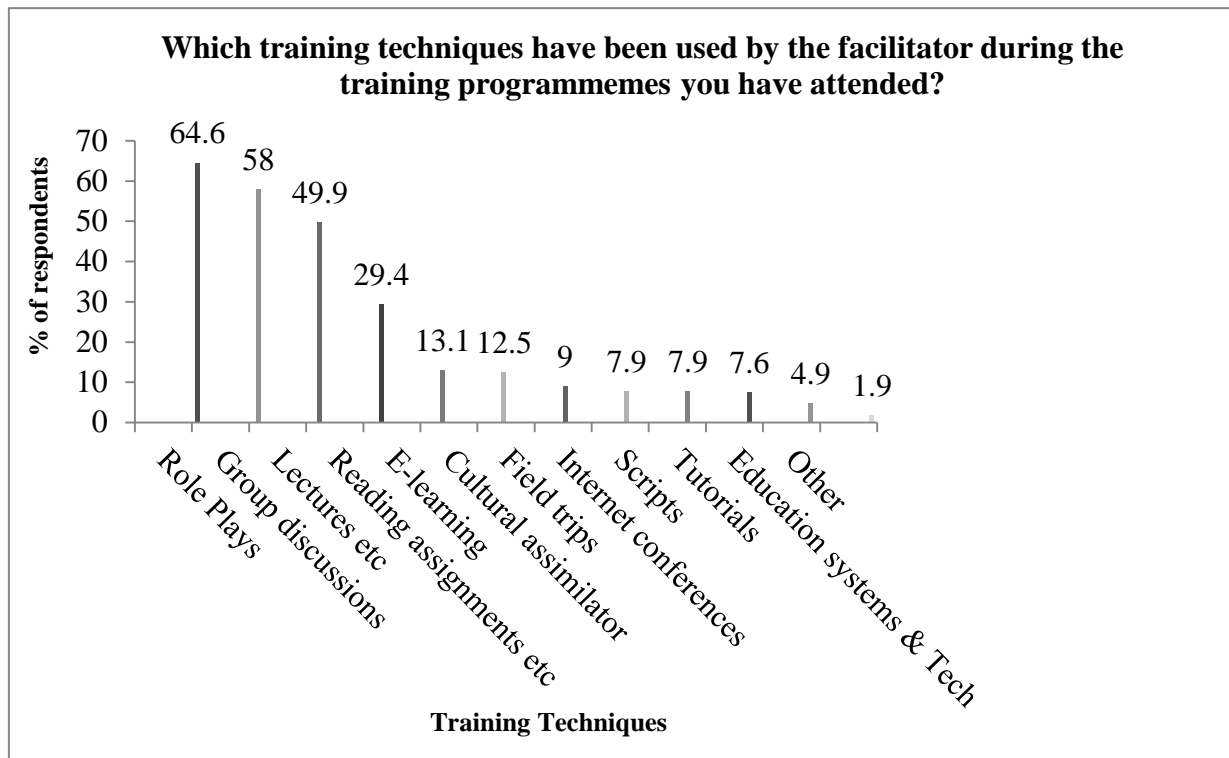
The above table demonstrates in descending order that 65.9% (n=242) had received training in customer service and positive attitudes; 61.6% (n=226) respondents have received training in product knowledge and awareness, 57.5% (n=211) have received specific training, 52% (n=191) have received training in regards to career awareness, 46.9% (n=172) have received training in developing their team working skills, 35.1% (n=129) have received training in developing their interpersonal skills, 28.9% (n=106) have received training in learning foreign languages, and 28.6% (n=105) have received training in reference to local Middle Eastern culture.

#### **5.5.6. Types of training techniques used by facilitators to deliver training to front-line employees.**

In the past a limited variety of training methods have been commonly used in the hospitality industry including mainly on-the-job training, demonstration, and role playing (Buick & Muthu, 1997). According to Marquardt (2002), classroom training has been considered as the most used method for conducting workplace learning.

The second question of the last part of the survey relates to the training techniques utilized by the facilitators whilst conducting training that respondents have attended. The respondents could select more than one answer based on a multiple choice multiple-response scale if they have attended any training programmes where reading assignments/case studies were used; field trips; tutorials; internet conferences; scripts; E-learning; role plays/instructional games/drill-and-practice; lectures and/or audio/visual presentations; distance education systems and technologies; group discussions; cultural assimilator/coaching; or other methods were used by the facilitator whilst conducting training.

**Figure 5.22: Training techniques used by facilitators to deliver training programmes respondents have attended.**



The bar chart above lists all the training techniques that could be used by facilitators whilst delivering training and the percentage of respondents who have learned using these training techniques. Training techniques more frequently used are roles plays, group discussions, and lectures in contrast to less frequently training techniques such as distance education systems and use of technologies.

#### **5.5.7. Training association with front-line employees' personal development plan.**

The third question on the last part of the survey asked the respondents to identify if the training programmes they have attended form part of their personal development plan. The findings showed that 76% of respondents (n=279) said that trainings do form part of their personal development plan, 13.1% (n=48) felt that their training does not form part of their personal development plan and 10.9% (n=40) don't know.

#### **5.5.8. Monthly amount of training received.**

The fourth question had an open-ended format and asked the respondents to write how many hours of in-house training they receive monthly.



**Table 5.13: Monthly hours of in-house training per employee.**

Statement	Number	Mean	St. Deviation
How many <i>hours of in-house training</i> do you receive in a typical <i>month</i> ?	367	10.00	9.273

The above table shows that the average is 10 hours of training per month for front-line employees.

### 5.5.9. Formal training outside of the workplace.

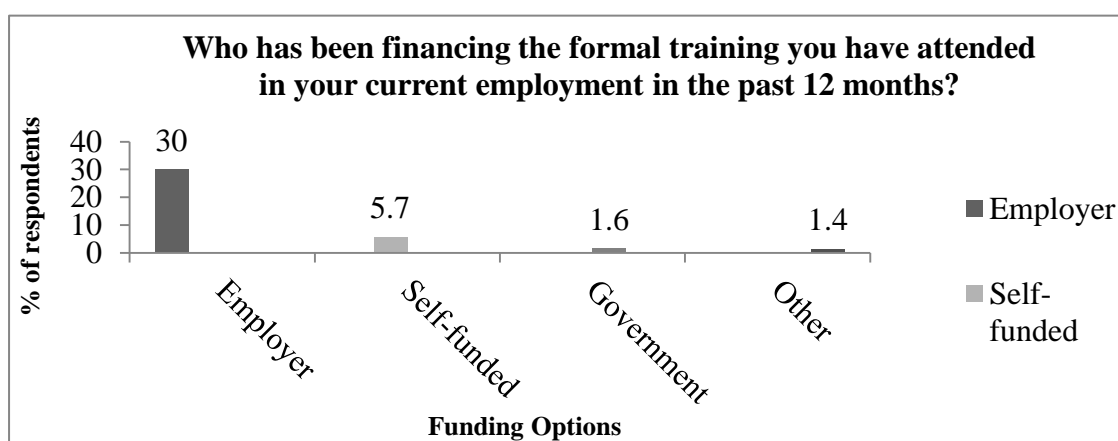
The fifth question of the survey asked participants if they have attended any formal training such as external programmes, seminars, or workshops that has particular objectives of learning and is conducted outside the workplace in their current employment during the past 12 months.

Out of 367 respondents, 38.6% (n=142) said that they have attended formal training outside their workplace and 63% (n=231) said that they have not attended any formal training in the past 12 months.

### 5.5.10. Financing of training.

The last question of the survey refers to funding of formal training outside the workplace. If employees have attended formal training then who has been financing the formal training. The respondents could select more than one answer ranging from self-funded, employer, government/local authorities, and other.

**Figure 5.23: Funding of formal training.**



The bar chart shows that out of 367 respondents only 142 respondents have attended formal training. Hence, 30% (n=110) are funded by the employer, 5.7% (n=21) themselves, 1.6% (n=6) by the government/local authorities and 1.4% (n=5) by other sources.

## **5.6. FINDINGS ON EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING TRAINING.**

Having looked into the perceptions of front-line employees in regards to the training provision from their current employer the next section will concentrate on identifying which factors are closely related to each other. Therefore, the variables under the organisational support towards training, management support towards training, adequacy of training facilities and services as well as perceived benefits will be investigated. In line with the discussion in the literature review chapter, four categories in relation to training are proposed which are:

- Organisational support towards training
- Management support towards training
- Adequacy of training facilities and services
- Perceived benefits of training

### **5.6.1. Inter-item correlation (Pearson Product-Moment Correlation).**

As a first step in the process of the factor model adequacy was to examine the inter-item correlation matrix. In case there is no evident satisfactory correlation then no factor solution should be expected from the analysis. The correlation matrix indicates how each statement and or question is associated with each other and the level of collinearity between variables (Cooper & Schindler, 2008). Therefore, the inter-item correlation is perceived as an indicator where high correlation shows the existence of common factors (please refer to appendix G- Inter-item correlation matrix). Based on Pheifer (2000) as cited in Sarantakos (2005, p.377) correlations are measured as follow: a correlation is very low if the coefficient has a value under 0.20; low if the value is between 0.21 and 0.40; moderate if the value is between 0.41 and 0.70; high if the value is between 0.71 and 0.91; and very high if the value is over 0.91. Inspection of the correlation matrix indicated that many of the coefficients to be 0.6 and above, and predominantly significant at the  $p < 0.001$  level.

The strongest correlation found was  $r = 0.857$  between variables 9 and 10. The two variables are as follow:

Statements	r value
9: "My supervisor jointly sets tasks and development goals with me."	$r = 0.857$
10: "My supervisor reviews my progress and provides me with feedback."	

On the basis of front-line employees' perceptions related to training, both variables represent a strong relationship under the proposed management support towards training and therefore correlate strongly with each other which supports the fact that high correlations mean that these variables probably will be in the same factor (Morgan & Griego, 1998). The fact that they show the highest correlation indicates the link between management responsibilities in regards to the alignment of tasks and development goals for front-line employees and the management review of progress and provision of feedback to front-line employees in the minds of the subjects.

Another strong correlation found was  $r = 0.850$  between variables 6 and 7. The two variables are as follow:

Statements	r value
6: "My supervisor informs me of available training programmes."	$r = 0.850$
7: "My supervisor encourages and supports me to take part in training and development opportunities."	

Based on front-line employees' perceptions related to training, both variables demonstrate a strong correlation under the proposed management support towards training and consequently, it proves to be strongly correlated variables. It indicates that communication of available programmes to front-line employees and the management encouragement and support for front-line employees to participate in training and development activities are strongly associated.

Six items were found to be correlated at the 0.8 level. The variable pairs and the relevant coefficients are as follow:

<b>Statements</b>	<b>r value</b>
8: "My supervisor regularly discusses my personal training and development needs with me." 9: "My supervisor jointly sets tasks and development goals with me."	r = 0.83
10: "My supervisor reviews my progress and provides me with feedback." 11: "My supervisor coaches and guides me effectively."	r = 0.83
8: "My supervisor regularly discusses my personal training and development needs with me." 10: "My supervisor reviews my progress and provides me with feedback."	r = 0.82
7: "My supervisor encourages and supports me to take part in training and development opportunities." 8: "My supervisor regularly discusses my personal training and development needs with me."	r = 0.81
7: "My supervisor encourages and supports me to take part in training and development opportunities." 9: "My supervisor jointly sets tasks and development goals with me."	r = 0.80
9: "My supervisor jointly sets tasks and development goals with me." 11: "My supervisor coaches and guides me effectively."	r = 0.80

Nineteen items were found to be correlated at the 0.7 level which are presented below.

<b>Statements</b>	<b>r value</b>
7: "My supervisor encourages and supports me to take part in training and development opportunities." 10: "My supervisor reviews my progress and provides me with feedback."	r = 0.79
8: "My supervisor regularly discusses my personal training and development needs with me." 11: "My supervisor coaches and guides me effectively."	r = 0.78
21: "As a result of training I am more productive at work." 22: "As a result of training I am more capable of providing high customer service to our guests."	r = 0.77
1: "My organisation provides its employees with good induction training." 2: "My organisation provides its employees with good technical/professional	r = 0.76

skills training.”	
6: “My supervisor informs me of available training programmes.” 8: “My supervisor regularly discusses my personal training and development needs with me.”	r = 0.76
7: “My supervisor encourages and supports me to take part in training and development opportunities.” 11: “My supervisor coaches and guides me effectively.”	r = 0.76
12: “The quality of the training programmes you have attended.” 13: “The trainers’ knowledge and expertise.”	r = 0.76
6: “My supervisor informs me of available training programmes.” 9: “My supervisor jointly sets tasks and development goals with me.”	r = 0.75
25: “As a result of training I feel more motivated at work.” 26: “As a result of training I feel satisfied with my job.”	r = 0.75
6: “My supervisor informs me of available training programmes.” 10: “My supervisor reviews my progress and provides me with feedback.”	r = 0.74
19: “As a result of training I am constantly improving and doing things better.” 21: “As a result of training I am more productive at work.”	r = 0.74
19: “As a result of training I am constantly improving and doing things better.” 22: “As a result of training I am more capable of providing high customer service to our guests.”	r = 0.74
6: “My supervisor informs me of available training programmes.” 11: “My supervisor coaches and guides me effectively.”	r = 0.73
18: “As a result of training I am more competent to perform my duties at the level of existing requirements.” 19: “As a result of training I am constantly improving and doing things better.”	r = 0.73
23: “As a result of training I am more enthusiastic and happy in the workplace.” 25: “As a result of training I feel more motivated at work.”	r = 0.73
26: “As a result of training I feel satisfied with my job.” 27: “As a result of training I feel valued by the company.”	r = 0.73
2: “My organisation provides its employees with good technical/professional skills training.” 4: “My organisation provides its employees with good on-the-job training.”	r = 0.72
27: “As a result of training I feel valued by the company.”	r = 0.71

28: “As a result of training I feel committed to the organisation.”	
20: “As a result of training I am able to be more innovative, more creative and suggestive of new ideas.’	r = 0.70
21: “As a result of training I am more productive at work.”	

Twenty-eight items were found to be correlated at the 0.60 level; however, the cut-off point has been set at 0.70 level.

The study of these correlations demonstrates that the statement pairs were in line with the suggested dimensions. Management and organisational support towards training for front-line employees, as well as the adequacy of training facilities and the perceived benefits of training are the ones represented on the above statements. The fact that the strongest correlations were along the suggested management support towards training dimension are the first evidence for the factor model adequacy.

In order to produce the factor structure, principal component analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation procedure was carried out to discover the number of factors and their relative loadings. It was hoped that the emerging factors would justify the hypothesised four-dimensional structure of training. This procedure was conducted on 30 survey items for a sample of 367 front-line employees.

#### **5.6.2. Bartlett test of sphericity (BTS).**

The Bartlett’s Test of sphericity had a value of 9312.376, and significance=0.000

For the BTS the significance level has to be less than 0.005 (Morgan & Griego, 1998). The larger value and the small significance level point out that, the hypothesis that the population correlation matrix is an identity matrix since for example, the diagonal values are 1 and the off-diagonal ones are 0 could be rejected. Hence, it indicates that the measure supports the notion that the correlation matrix has significant correlation for some variables.

#### **5.6.3. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy.**

KMO requests statistics regarding the amount of correlation in the data as a whole (Baggio & Klobas, 2011). According to Kaiser’s (1974) classification, the computed value of 0.944 for the KMO is close to the ‘marvellous’ category of greater than 0.9 which supports the

adequacy of the factor analysis method for this set of data, exceeding the recommended value of 0.6.

#### **5.6.4. Factor Analysis Methodology.**

The factor analysis includes two main stages; factor extraction and factor rotation. The objective of the factor rotation is to make a preliminary decision about the number of factors underlying a set of measured variables by manipulating statistically the results so the factors can be more interpretable and to make final decisions about the number of underlying factors (Green & Salkind, 2003).

The criteria for retention called for minimum eigenvalues greater than 1.0. According to Brotherton (2008), the eigenvalue produced by the PCA is an index of the amount of variance the factor comprises of in the original set of variables by retaining the factors, which have an eigenvalue greater than one.

#### **5.6.5. Factor Rotation.**

Orthogonal (Varimax). The Varimax rotation method has been selected so to minimise the number of variables which can have a high loading on a factor and consequently simplifying the interpretation of the resultant factors.

#### **5.6.6. Missing Values.**

A listwise exclusion of missing values was applied.

#### **5.6.7. Numbers of factors to be extracted.**

In order to get a result at a maximum number of factors, several suggested criteria have been examined. Firstly, the number of factors could be identified and therefore selected prior to the analysis. Based on the research questions, the number of factors could have been set at four. However, if that pre-selection was conducted then it would restrict the analysis and therefore it was rejected.

Additionally, Kaiser's (1960) criterion suggests that mainly factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 to be considered. The importance of the criterion for this set of data can be supported on two factors: it is regarded suitable for the principle component model and for the number of variables (30) which fall under the 20-50 categories, for which the criterion is more reliable (Grimm & Yarnold, 2001).

The number of factors with a minimum eigenvalue of 1 is five, proposing that the factor extraction should stop after the 5<sup>th</sup> factor (please refer to Table 5.14).

As per the percentage of variance criterion, the number of factors extracted is linked to the cumulative percentage of variance, which the factor accounts for. The 5 factor solution suggested by Kaiser's criterion accounts for 72.0% of the variance meaning that over 2/3 of the variance is accounted by these 5 factors. According to the acceptability of a 60% threshold in social sciences by Hair *et al.* (1995) as the cut-off for a factor loading to be large enough to be meaningful as cited in Baggio and Klobas, (2011), the 5 factor solution can be justified and supported. For human resources management projects a contribution to variance of over 40% can be interesting, due to the complexity of the phenomena being studied (Anderson, 2009).

**Table 5.14: The 5-factor solution and its major properties.**

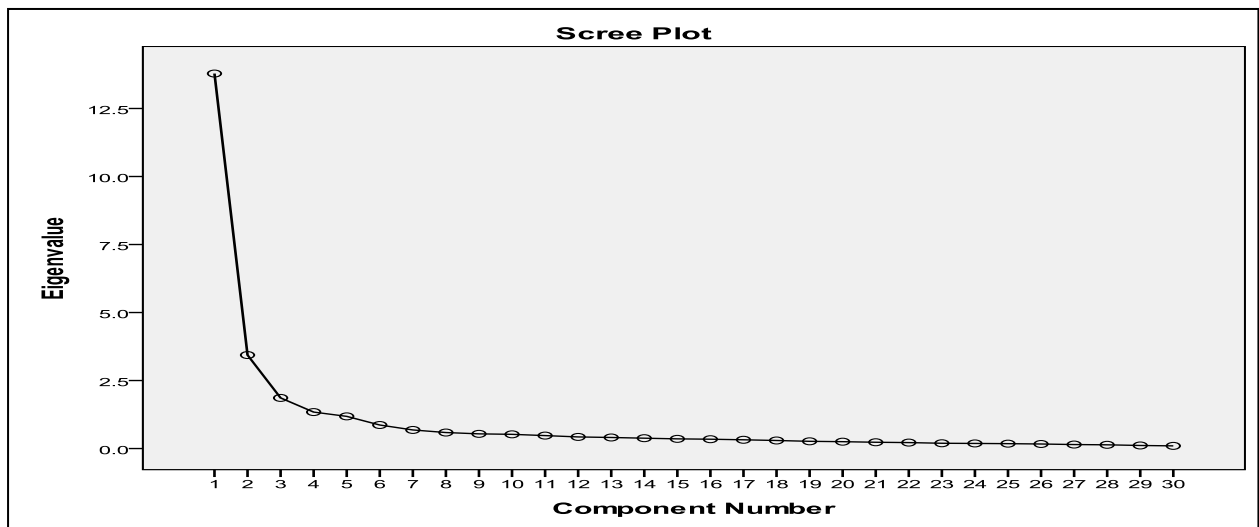
FACTORS	Eigenvalue	% of variance	Cumulative %
FACTOR I	13.784	45.9	45.9
FACTOR II	3.436	11.4	57.4
FACTOR III	1.861	6.2	63.6
FACTOR IV	1.340	4.4	68.0
FACTOR V	1.183	3.9	72.0

An alternative way of looking at the problem is the application of the scree test, which visualises a solution based on which number of factors to extract.

The graph is produced by obtaining the eigenvalues against the number of factors in the order of their extraction. It should be noticed that where there is almost no gradient and the curve is “flat”, is where the line begins to flatten up that is considered as the cut-off point showing the number of factors which have to be extracted. This reflect the ‘descent’ from a quite high eigenvalue for factor 1 and factor 2 to a further but much smaller eigenvalue for factors 3,4, and 5. Hence, this is a visual suggestion that there are 5 factors, one more significant than the other in explaining variance within the responses as a whole. The scree plot is illustrated in Figure 5.24.



**Figure 5.24: Factor Scree Plot.**



In the above figure, it is distinct that the line straightens at the 5<sup>th</sup> factor, suggesting that five factors can be extracted. The five factors account for 72.0% of the variance and therefore the five-factor model has been retained.

#### **5.6.8. Findings from factor analysis.**

Based on the above criteria, factor analysis using the principal component methods resulted in a 5 factor solution. The assignment of variables to factors has been made possible by the structure of factor loadings, wherein every variable showed high loading on a factor. The factor loadings range from 0.520 to 0.850. According to Stevens (2002, pp. 395), "*a factor is reliable if it has 4 or more variables with loadings of 0.6 and any  $n$* ". The minimum number of variables required for 5 factors are 9 variables (Mardia, Kent, & Bibby, 1979). On this case, we have 4 factors and 30 variables so the numbers of factors is suitable for testing. As a result all the utilised factor loadings can be perceived as significant.

Five factors were emerged from the analysis (please refer to Table 5.15). Factor I represents the Perceived benefits related to knowledge, skills and abilities (7 items,  $\alpha=.96$ ), Factor II represents the management support towards training (6 items,  $\alpha=.88$ ), Factor III represents the adequacy of training facilities and service (6 items,  $\alpha=.88$ ), Factor IV represents the perceived benefits related to attitude and behaviour(6items,  $\alpha=.96$ ), and Factor V represents the organisational support towards training (5 items,  $\alpha=.93$ ). The factor loadings are shown in Table 5.15.

**Table 5.15: Factor Analysis for Organisational Support towards training, Management Support towards training, Adequacy of Training facilities and services and Perceived benefits.**

	Factors				
	I	II	III	IV	V
22. As a result of training I am more capable of providing <i>high customer service</i> to our guests.	.839				
21. As a result of training I am more <i>productive</i> at work.	.829				
19. As a result of training I am constantly <i>improving and doing things better</i> .	.825				
20. As a result of training I am able to be more <i>innovative, more creative and suggestive</i> of new ideas.	.761				
30. As a result of training I am ready for a <i>promotion</i> .	.722				
18. As a result of training I am more <i>competent to perform my duties</i> at the level of existing requirements.	.699				
24. As a result of training I feel more <i>confident</i> at work.	.632				
8. My supervisor regularly <i>discusses my personal training and development needs</i> with me.		.850			
9. My supervisor <i>jointly sets tasks and development goals with me</i> .		.848			
10. My supervisor <i>reviews my progress and provides me with feedback</i> .		.844			
7. My supervisor <i>encourages and supports me</i> to take part in training and development opportunities.		.843			
11. My supervisor <i>coaches and guides me</i> effectively.		.814			
6. My supervisor <i>informs me of available training</i>		.773			

*programmes.*

15. The <i>location</i> of the training facilities.	.771
14. The <i>training material</i> (e.g. handouts).	.750
12. The <i>quality of the training programmes</i> you have attended.	.713
13. The <i>trainers' knowledge and expertise</i> .	.709
16. The <i>physical working conditions</i> in the room (e.g. AC, lighting, audiovisual equipment).	.707
17. The food and beverage services (e.g. refreshments, meals, breaks).	.571
26. As a result of training I feel <i>satisfied</i> with my job.	.777
25. As a result of training I feel more <i>motivated</i> at work.	.743
27. As a result of training I feel <i>valued</i> by the company.	.741
28. As a result of training I feel <i>committed</i> to the organisation.	.643
23. As a result of training I am more <i>enthusiastic and happy</i> in my workplace.	.636
29. As a result of training I am entitled for a <i>reward/ incentive</i> .	.520
4. My organisation provides its employees with <i>good on-the-job training</i> (e.g. training given to employees at their work place).	.769
2. My organisation provides its employees with <i>good technical/ professional skills training</i> .	.710
1. My organisation provides its employees with <i>good induction training</i> .	.708
5. My organisation provides its employees with <i>good cross training</i> (e.g. training given to employees in different job roles or different departments).	.672
3. My organisation provides its employees with <i>good off-the-job training</i> (e.g. training given to employees away from their work place such as at a college or school).	.618

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Cronbach alpha	0.960	0.883	0.880	0.960	0.935
Eigenvalue	13.784	3.436	1.861	1.340	1.183
Variance explained	45.9%	11.4%	6.2%	4.4%	3.9%

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Note: Rotation converged in 7 iterations.

#### 5.6.9. The naming of the factors.

The naming of the factors did not prove to be a difficult task, since it could be performed based on the lines set by the original suggested training model. The five factors demonstrated a clear association with the proposed structure allowing the keeping of the original four dimensions illustrated in table 5.16.

**Table 5.16: The named factors.**

Factor	Name
<b>Factor I</b>	Perceived benefits related to knowledge, skills and abilities
<b>Factor II</b>	Management support towards training
<b>Factor III</b>	Adequacy of training facilities and services
<b>Factor IV</b>	Perceived benefits related to attitude and behaviour
<b>Factor V</b>	Organisational support towards training

The factors and the relevant variables are listed below.

#### **Factor I – Perceived benefits related to knowledge, skills and abilities.**

18. As a result of training I am more *competent to perform my duties* at the level of existing requirements.

19. As a result of training I am constantly *improving and doing things better*.

20. As a result of training I am able to be more *innovative, more creative and suggestive* of new ideas.

21. As a result of training I am more *productive* at work.

22. As a result of training I am more capable of providing *high customer service* to our guests.

24. As a result of training I feel more *confident* at work.

30. As a result of training I am ready for a *promotion*.

### **Factor II - Management support towards training**

6. My supervisor *informs me of available training programmes*.

7. My supervisor *encourages and supports me* to take part in training and development opportunities.

8. My supervisor regularly *discusses my personal training and development needs* with me.

9. My supervisor *jointly sets tasks and development goals with me*.

10. My supervisor *reviews my progress and provides me with feedback*.

11. My supervisor *coaches and guides me* effectively.

### **Factor III - Adequacy of training facilities and service**

12. The *quality of the training programmes* you have attended.

13. The *trainers' knowledge and expertise*.

14. The *training material* (e.g. handouts).

15. The *location* of the training facilities.

16. The *physical working conditions* in the room (e.g. AC, lighting, audiovisual equipment).

17. The food and beverage services (e.g. refreshments, meals, breaks).

### **Factor IV- Perceived benefits related to attitude and behaviour**

23. As a result of training I am more *enthusiastic and happy* in my workplace.

25. As a result of training I feel more *motivated* at work.

26. As a result of training I feel *satisfied* with my job.

27. As a result of training I feel *valued* by the company.
28. As a result of training I feel *committed* to the organisation.
29. As a result of training I am entitled for a *reward/ incentive*.

#### **Factor V - Organisational support towards training**

1. My organisation provides its employees with *good induction training*.
2. My organisation provides its employees with *good technical/ professional skills training*.
3. My organisation provides its employees with *good off –the-job training* (e.g. training given to employees away from their work place such as at a college or school).
4. My organisation provides its employees with *good on-the-job training* (e.g. training given to employees at their work place).
5. My organisation provides its employees with *good cross training* (e.g. training given to employees in different job roles or different departments).

The factor analysis has largely justified the proposed model of training in the study of human capital investment of front-line employees in five star hotels in Dubai, but it also added a fifth factor.

To obtain a clearer understanding of the factors, Pearson’s correlation was performed in the five factors. Five variables were entered in the correlational analysis – perceived benefits related to knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA), management support towards training, adequacy of training facilities and service, perceived benefits related to attitudinal skills and organisational support towards training, which were the results of the factor analysis.

The component correlation matrix (please refer to table 5.17) shows the strength of the relationship between the five factors, so to decide whether there is reasonable to assume if the factors are related or not to each other. The value of strength of the relationship between two variables will be identified based on the following: a correlation of 0 will indicate that there is no relationship at all; a correlation of 1.0 will indicate that there is a perfect correlation; and a value of -1.0 will indicate that there is a perfect negative correlation.

**Table 5.17: Correlations among the five factors.**

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Perceived benefits related to knowledge, skills and abilities	367	4.33	.590	1
Adequacy of training facilities and service	367	4.14	.603	2
Perceived benefits related to attitude and behaviour	367	4.08	.731	3
Organisational support towards training	367	4.02	.729	4
Management support towards training	367	3.76	.947	5

*Source: Questionnaire n=367*

The above table illustrates the relevant mean, standard deviation, and rank of each factor in a descending order. It is evident that (M=4.33, SD=.590) perceived benefits related to knowledge, skill and abilities was the highest as opposed to management support towards training which had the lowest factor (M=3.76, SD=.947).

**Table 5.18: The bivariate correlations among the five factors.**

	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III	Factor IV	Factor V
	BenKSA	Mansuptr	Adeqtrfac	Benatt&beh	Orgsupt
Factor I BenKSA	<b>1.00</b>	0.35**	0.50**	0.68**	0.53**
Factor II Mansuptr	0.35**	<b>1.00</b>	0.58**	0.56**	0.63**
Factor III Adeqtrfac	0.50**	0.58**	<b>1.00</b>	0.55**	0.62**
Factor IV Benatt&beh	0.68**	0.56**	0.55**	<b>1.00</b>	0.59**
Factor V Orgsupt training	0.53**	0.63**	0.62**	0.59**	<b>1.00</b>

Note: \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Note: Perceived benefits related to knowledge, skills and abilities – BenKSA, Management support towards training – Mansuptr, Adequacy of training facilities and services – Adeqtrfac, Perceived benefits related to attitude and behaviour – Benatt&beh, Organisational support towards training - Orgsupt.



Bivariate correlation coefficients were computed amongst the five factors. The correlation with asterisks (\*\*) indicate a particular correlation is significant at the .01 level, *p* values are associated with the significance tests for these correlations and sample size (N=367). The results of the correlational analysis presented in Table 5.18 shows that all correlations were statistically significant and were greater or equal to .35. The strength of association either positive or negative is based on the following: small between .1 to .4, medium between .4 to .6, and large above .6.

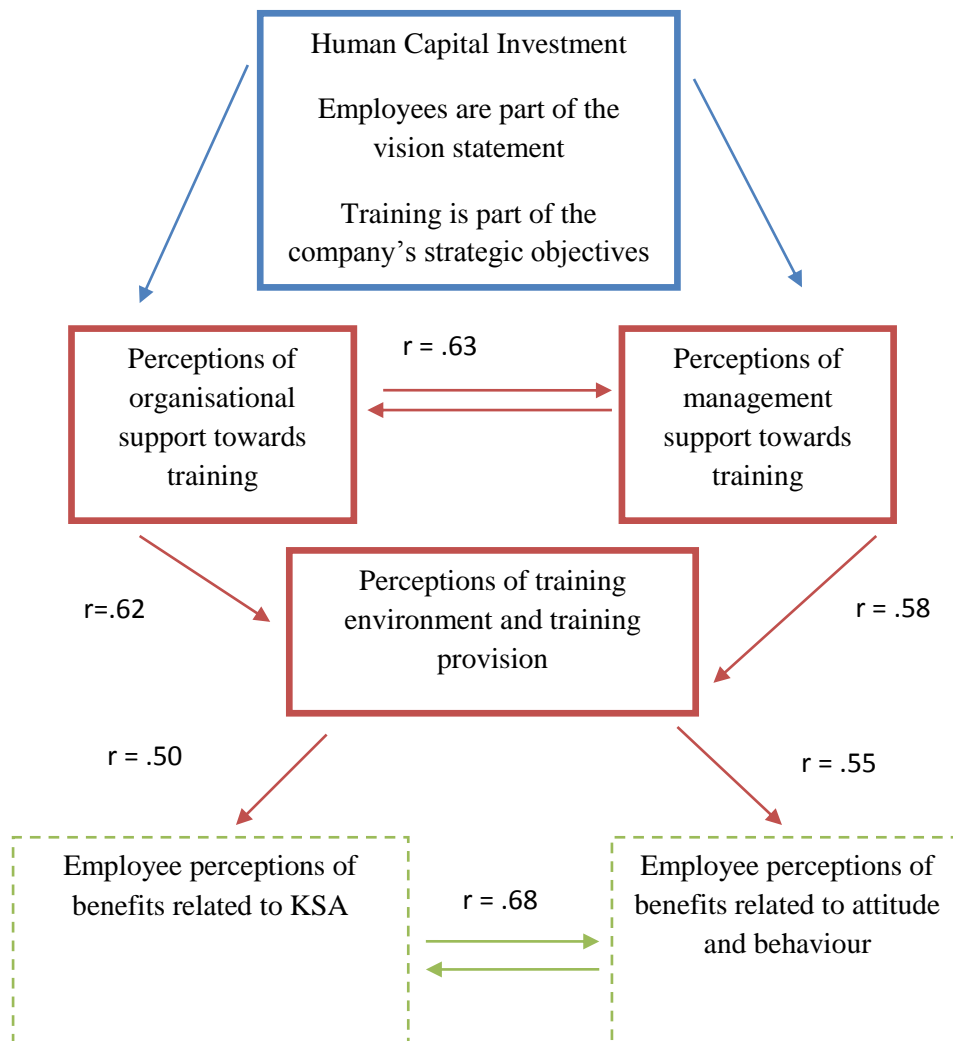
Based on the bivariate correlations among the five factors, Model 3 supports the following:

- There is an association between organisational support towards training and management support towards training.
- Organisational support towards training has a positive relationship with the adequacy of training facilities and services.
- Management support towards training has a positive relationship with the adequacy of training facilities and services.
- The adequacy of training facilities and services has a positive relationship with perceived benefits of training.

Model 3 illustrates the two new dimensions which were added after conducting the factor analysis. Individual benefits were split into two categories: the benefits related to employees' knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA) and the benefits related to employees' attitude and behaviour.

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### Model 3: Training model based on quantitative findings.



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## 5.7. CHAPTER SUMMARY.

To conclude the above chapter analysed the findings using mixed methods approach. Overall, front-line employees have high levels of satisfaction with the provision of the programmes, the material and content of the training programmes, the management and organisational support towards training and the perceived benefits as a result of training. Nevertheless, management also agreed and expressed high levels of satisfaction with the commitment and support by the company and the individual hotel units, support towards resources and training provision and training interventions for front line employees. However, challenges and

barriers were identified clearly during the interviews and to support their statements, the researcher observed training programmes to identify what is actually happening during these actual events. Generally, the company is strongly committed towards the development of front-line employees and human capital investment is part not only of their strategy but of their day-to-day activities as it has been identified based on the above findings. Areas for improvement are mainly expressed by L&D managers/directors in regards to the need of additional finances towards the L&D department and its resources, more involvement of line-managers in departmental training, rigid review processes and follow up of front-line employees who have attended training programmes, further development of trainers/facilitators, more structured evaluation processes, lack of HCI reports and measurements and an immense need of updating all training content of programmes. By addressing all these areas for improvement, the facilitation of the delivery of programmes will be in line with current L&D styles used in the sector.

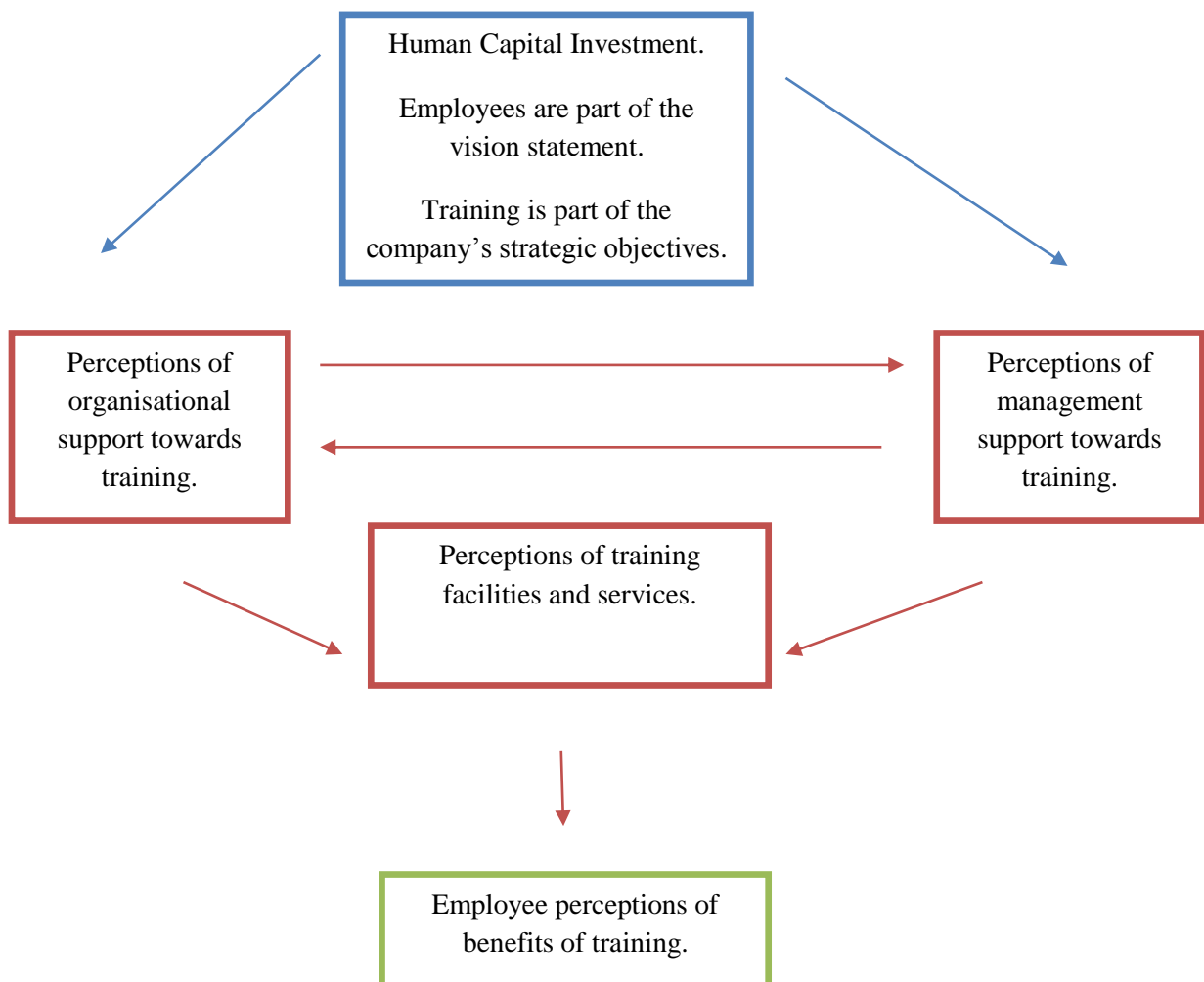
## CHAPTER SIX – DISCUSSION.

### 6.1. INTRODUCTION.

This chapter discusses the findings in more depth by comparing and contrasting them with the literature. The results of this study confirmed that there is a high investment and strong belief in Human Capital Investment for front-line non managerial employees within five star hotel properties in Dubai. The suggested training model illustrated below which was used as a guide to the study has been further developed based on the findings of the study, bringing into light new dimensions.

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**Model 1: Suggested Training Model.**



The first part of this chapter interprets and discusses the qualitative findings drawn from the five interviews with managers, representing their perceptions in regards to the current efforts by training departments in the devising and delivery of training for front line employees in five star hotels in Dubai, U.A.E. The eight observations were conducted in order to evaluate the delivery of training courses for front-line employees in the five star hotels and these findings are used to support or contrast the findings from the interviews. Past literature and other studies are used to compare and contrast the results of this current study and eventually to support model 2.

Thereafter, the second part of this chapter interprets the quantitative findings based on 367 questionnaires of front-line employees either working in the Food and Beverage department or the Front Office department within five star hotels in Dubai, U.A.E. Referring to past literature as well as the quantitative results model 3 is developed.

Finally, the last part of this chapter is based on data triangulation supporting model 4, which is the outcome of both qualitative and quantitative findings of this research study and more importantly contribution to academic knowledge.

## **6.2. DISCUSSION OF QUALITATIVE FINDINGS.**

The qualitative results of this study aimed to answer objectives two and three of this study.

- To examine the current human capital needs for employees in the hospitality sector in Dubai (U.A.E.).
- To consider and evaluate current efforts by hotel training departments to devise and deliver training to front-line employees.

### **Theme I – role of the learning and development department.**

This study shows that the role of the learning and development department ranked first amongst the other eight themes, which adds a new dimension to the suggested training model. The subthemes included refer to the responsibilities of the L&D department, the use of Learning Needs Analysis, training feedback, training budget, training evaluation, and trainers' development.

### *Responsibilities of the L&D department*

The current study reveals that the role of the L&D department is crucial for the hotel operations. As a department, it should not be just a centralised function but an existing department in each hotel. Additionally, the L&D department is in charge of all internal training programmes except with training programmes related to health and safety, and English language courses, which are run externally by third parties. These results support Smith's and Kemmis's (2010) findings that in larger hospitality organisations a professional training department and the content of their training is more related to hotel brand standards.

### *Design of training budget*

Furthermore, the L&D department's role is crucial in designing the L&D annual training budget in order to finance internal and external training. This result is consistent with the work of Phillips and Phillips (2005), and Choi and Dickson (2009) who supported that there is a significant relationship between the role of the L&D department and the funding of training. Jameson's study (2000) has also documented this point by stating that companies do have a systematic approach to training based on a training plan and allocated training budget. However, according to these results certain training activities are excluded from the L&D annual training budget, such as, specific external training programmes identified by operational departments due to compliance with new regulations introduced by the Dubai government primarily concerned with health and safety. However, at this point some interesting issues arose. Even though these results clearly evidence that the L& D department is in charge of the training budget, the findings reveal that managers are unaware of their per capital spending. The training budget varies between hotels from 0.60 per cent to one per cent of total hotel revenue. Another concern faced by the L&D department is the lack of flexibility due to the financial crisis. For instance, during the financial crisis of 2008, the central learning department of the company was erased completely and employees within the centre either were made redundant or were moved to specific hotel units. Thus, supporting the work of Cannon and Gustafson (2002) and the CIPD's annual survey of Learning and Talent Development (CIPD, 2011) which proved that a reduction of training can be due to financial crisis, company restructuring, the training department been eliminated, downsizing through redundancies and laying people off. These findings reveal that during economic recession times, hotel training budgets were cut down, the entire training centre was closed down opposing the strong corporate belief in human capital investment and overall training. Even though these tactics are known to be adopted by companies to manage, support, and decrease

any further financial losses (Kennedy, 2009) other scholars have supported that the right tactic is to increase training during financial turmoil (Daniel, 2008; Taylor, 2003). As an example looking into the financial impact of 9/11, Southwest Airlines amongst others increased the training budgets and made workforce development sessions places of inspiration by focusing on training for specific skills of front-level supervisors aiming to increase front-line employees' emotional engagement, team spirit and involvement.

Moreover, is the L&D department's responsibility to sell the training programmes to the HODs and to add business value? These results support views that suggest that the value of human capital is linked directly to a company's performance and that the HR department is responsible for demonstrating its contribution to the business (Warech & Tracey, 2004). This study also supports the work of Bahlis (2008); by confirming that the L&D department has the overall responsibility to address the ways training assists the hotel units as well as the entire organisation to attain its goals. Moreover, the L&D department can support whether training is valuable and worthwhile investing in, and by constantly making comparisons of the L&D budget allocation and the L&D department's contribution in contrast to other organisational initiatives. In addition, the results of the current study show that a new trend is emerging associated with the L&D department's role shifting from a trainer's role to a consultant role but still being considered as an area of improvement by the L&D professionals. As Warech and Tracey (2004) argued the role of Human Resources professionals and in this case, L&D professionals' is to be able to measure, understand, and communicate any human capital interventions on organisational performance. Consequently, it is evident from the study that there is a change of the actual role of the L&D department to a strategic role with stronger presence within the corporate level of the company.

### *Conducting LNA*

Furthermore, these results indicate that another key responsibility of the L&D department is to conduct the learning needs analysis (LNA) annually representing organisational, management, and employees' needs. The use of a survey to determine the needs is conducted amongst all the HODs of the hotels in order to: firstly, to identify departmental needs, secondly to assist the L&D department to tailor the training budget and the training calendar accordingly and thirdly to increase the L&D department's awareness of the hotels' business levels. Furthermore, the identification of the organisational needs is done through meetings between the L&D management team and senior executives from the corporate office, and

employee individual needs are identified through the review of employees' IDPs. These findings are in line with the literature on LNA, suggesting that this process should consist of the organisational analysis, the person analysis, and the task analysis (Brown, 2002; Cedaka, 2010; Noe *et al.*, 2012; Sorenson, 2002). Consistent with the work of Sorenson (2002), this study supports that the benefits associated with the LNA reflect on the creation of a learning environment through the identification and planning of essential training programmes, proper scheduling of training programmes, identification of training expenses and required training budget, and enhancement of training quality programmes. Training costs fall under the LNA budget consisting of operating expenses, training rooms' rental, training material, payroll, manpower resources, equipment, and resources that need purchasing which supports the annual survey in talent and development by the CIPD (2011) suggesting that all of the above training costs form part of a company's training budget. Moreover, the results of this study reveal that another benefit associated with LNA, reflects the increased commitment by line managers towards training by giving access and adequate time off to employees to attend the training programmes. As argued by Noe *et al.* (2012) and Brown (2002), support by managers is an essential part of the organisational analysis during the LNA and as a result management support towards training lead to strong corporate culture and enhancement of organisational commitment (Bartlett & Kang, 2004).

#### *Use of training feedback*

Furthermore, these results show that the L&D department relies heavily on feedback and according to Noe *et al.* (2012), feedback forms part of the creation of a learning environment. Guest feedback, trainers' feedback, colleague feedback and management feedback are crucial for the efficient and effective operation of the L&D department. The findings of this study show that guest feedback is reflected upon the delivery of service by front-line employees. In the case of customer's negative feedback, the hotels encounter an increase in customer complaints, increase in refunds and lost business, impacting negatively on the bottom line. Consistent with the work of Tantawy and Losekoot (2000), this study displayed similarities on their findings and support that bad service quality, bad staff attitude, and bad product quality result in an increase on customer complaints. Subsequently, in line with Tantawy and Losekoot's (2000) recommendations, this study confirms that the company provides training programmes to enhance and develop front-line employees' customer service skills, as well as attitudinal training in order for front-line employees been able to display the appropriate behavior towards customers. As an example, one of the components of the training



programme 'Creating Memorable Experiences' aimed to change the way front-line employees interpret negative guest feedback to a positive manner without displaying feelings of nervousness. However, through this training programme empowerment was not really reinforced which is identified as a weakness when compared to the study of Jha and Nair (2008), who suggested that empowerment assists front-line employees in resolving guest issues without assistance or guidance by supervisors. Another weakness of the programme related to the lack of role-plays which is the recommended training technique for this kind of training according to Tantawy and Losekoot (2000).

Moreover, the L&D department highly values trainers' feedback mainly to determine the adequate length of the training programs and by listening to front-line employees' feedback who have attended training programmes, useful information is provided to the L&D department in regards to the overall evaluation of each training program as well as its length. Management feedback also assists the L&D department in identifying the adequate length of training programs, in granting employee time off, and in collecting information concerning training evaluation. Hence, feedback from these sources contributes positively to the success of the L&D operation as well as to the enhancement of training quality interventions.

Although past studies have identified that length of training is associated with the learning and transfer of new skills in the workplace (Cole, 2008) and with the achievement of training learning goals and objectives by the participants (Thacker & Blanchard, 2006). It was noticeable from the results that the length and scheduling of the training programs are based and influenced by two factors; hotels' business levels identified by line management and achievement of learning and training objectives through the use of evaluation sheets identified by employees (Thacker & Blanchard, 2006). Even though, Taylor, Russ-Eft and Chan (2005), and Holladay and Quinones (2003), argued that a significant relationship exists between skill development and lengthy training to guarantee adaptability in practice and produce 'self-efficacy', this study demonstrates that due to insufficient training time, front-line employees do not have the time to put into practice what they learn. Similarly, trial and error opportunities do not form part of the training programmes resulting in the acquisition of fewer learning outcomes by participants, supporting the study of Ivancic and Hesketh (1995).

According to Cole (2008), another benefit associated with lengthy training programmes is overlearning but this study shows that overlearning does not take place during the training

programmes, supporting the study of Blair and Seo (2007) who suggested that overlearning is a disadvantage provoking participants' frustration, damaging management credibility and creating negative impressions of training quality offered to employees. Nevertheless, this study highlights that insufficient training affects negatively the learning of front-line employees and it is the L&D department's responsibility to review the provision and length of training programmes. Hence, supporting the work of Taner (2001), and Deng (2009), who believed that insufficient training could have even more detrimental results and be classified as a barrier to the organisation's prosperity, growth, and development.

In addition, feedback from other hotel properties assists the L&D department to align its training activities and functionality as a department and further enhance the consistency and brand standards of the training programmes. As an example, the L&D department based on the feedback from all the hotels reviewed the 'Welcome Programme', which was observed in Hotel A. Because of this review, the same induction programme is used by all hotels reflecting a standardized program with hotel specific content. The only variations that reflected on each hotel property are the description of the hotel unit, the show round of the hotel unit, and the introduction to the executive committee. The remaining presentations delivered by each HOD during the induction programme in regards to HRM policies and procedures, Business Excellence, Health and Safety, and Cultural awareness are the same throughout the hotel properties. This emphasizes that the new version of the induction programme has more specific and compact content than before, better use of time by decreasing its length from five to three days making it more effective. In addition, these findings support the literature that formal onsite orientation sessions form part of the socialization practices (Louis *et al.*, 1983), and this supports the findings of Kusluvan *et al.* (2010), Lam *et al.* (2002), and Rollag (2004), that the company through the induction training allows newcomers to familiarize and adapt themselves with the work environment. Consequently, employees' first experiences within the company take place in a training setting, which aims to encourage employees' loyalty and identity with the organisation by sharing the mission, vision, and hallmarks of the company supporting the study of Louis *et al.* (1983). In addition, the explanation of local culture and laws of the Middle Eastern culture and more precisely UAE local laws form part of the cross-cultural training supporting the studies of Forster (2000), and Fe Causin *et al.* (2011). Through this cross-cultural training the company provides employees with the adequate knowledge and tools required to decrease misinterpretations and inappropriate behaviour supporting the findings of Madera (2011)

within the Middle Eastern culture. Taking into consideration the workforce composition of this company, 99 per cent of the workforce is represented by labour migrants and expatriates and is also a reflection of Dubai's labour demographics primarily in the private sector and a reflection of Dubai's workforce in the hospitality industry. Hence, diversity training is needed, required, and provided in five star hotels in Dubai. Consequently, this study supports the work of Christensen (2005) and Madeira (2011) who argued that due to a country's demographic trends and shifts in immigrants, mix diversity training programs have to be incorporated. Companies should therefore aim for positive training outcomes such as less discrimination in the workplace, higher employee job satisfaction, higher retention rate and increase of employees' commitment (Mowday *et al.*, 1982; Tannenbaum *et al.*, 1991). This study shows that the part of cross-cultural training is incorporated in the induction programme thoroughly and delivered through a classroom presentation by a UAE National supporting the work of Pedry, Driskoll and Field (2007), who have argued that classroom presentation is amongst one of the adequate delivery methods for diversity training.

#### *Use of training evaluation*

These findings reveal that another responsibility of the L&D department is training evaluation. Evaluation of training programmes is conducted through various sources and it is used as a tool to improve the quality of training interventions. Besides, these findings also reveal that the L&D departments of the company use different ways to evaluate training including an annual evaluation report which shows the achieved results, departmental audits conducted by the L&D departments, and the up keeping of employees training records looking into the provision of sufficient training. Consequently, training evaluation leads to the identification of employees' needs and training expectations, increased communication, and increased support by line management consistent with the work of Chiang *et al.* (2005).

Nevertheless, weak points in terms of the means and the frequency used to obtain the training evaluations are evident due to the fact that training evaluations are carried out through an annual evaluation report conducted in some hotel properties emphasizing the inconsistency of the annual evaluation report amongst the hotel properties. This study supports the work of Kirkpatrick (1975), and Phillips (1994), in regards to the level 1 of the TKM model which is used to evaluate training, namely Level 1 – Reaction to the training program. In addition, this study supports Chiang *et al.*'s (2005) findings that in order to enhance the training

environment, one of the training strategies used by organisations is to obtain employee feedback through training evaluations.

Another influential factor to the design of the training plans by the L&D department are the results from mystery visits/shoppers, guest comments cards, quality audits, and training evaluations. For instance, the 'LQA standards' training was provided to front-line F&B employees as a result of a mystery visit which scored low, 75 per cent in comparison to the expected 77 per cent. Consistent with the studies of Barroso *et al.* (2004), Dean (2004), González *et al.* (2006), Valera and García (2006), and Lin and Mattila (2010), this study emphasizes that the company heavily depends on front-line employees producing and delivering high quality service reflecting on the luxury products and services offered by five star hotel properties. Moreover front-line employees' attitude and behaviour can influence customer satisfaction and service quality. Therefore, the 'LQA standards' training content mainly focused on employees' confidence, posture, eye contact, product knowledge, ways of starting and ending a conversation with a customer, aiming to enhance customer experience through a more personalized interaction as expected in luxury hotels. Furthermore, action plans derived from these mechanisms (i.e. mystery visits/shoppers, guest comments cards, quality audits, and training evaluations) lead the training initiatives within the hotels resulting in the alignment of training plans and departmental needs.

The findings also reveal that the constant reviews of scores assist the L&D department to identify areas for improvement. For instance, negative guest feedback will result in training provision and this supports the findings of Pratten (2003), who argued that negative customer feedback can be based on numerous reasons and deficiencies in service can be due to low understanding of waiting staff jobs, inadequate training and experience resulting in low performance by front-line staff. As a result, there is a failure of meeting customer expectations and showing impoliteness by front-line employees.

#### *Trainer's role*

The findings of this study indicate that another responsibility of the L&D department is to oversee the trainers' development in order to ensure that trainers have the adequate knowledge, skills and abilities to deliver training, provide guidance, take care of learners' needs and enhance the quality of training interventions. Furthermore, in order to support the development of the L&D trainers, several activities are undertaken by the L&D senior management such as the organisation of learning events which run during the year with key

practitioners in the area of training, coaching, mentoring, guiding, continuous one-to-one feedback and recognition of the trainer's performance. Because of these management efforts, the outcomes are positive towards the development of the trainers. Consequently, the findings of this study demonstrate that overall the trainers who delivered the training courses displayed a number of competencies such as teamwork; good organisational knowledge; inspiration and motivation; good programme preparation skills; good communication skills; good listening skills; creativity; humour; energy; lively; and love and passion for the profession. These results are in line with the studies of Kalargyrou and Woods (2009), Lalaguna (2007), and Leigh (2006) who mentioned that all of the above competencies are necessary and important for the job of a trainer and according to Davenport (2007) financial and IT skills should be required from trainers.

Nevertheless, it has to be noted that during the observations of 'telephone skills', 'praise me reloaded' and 'who moved my cheese' the activities were partially introduced and unclear guidance was given to participants by the trainers. This reflected negatively on the competencies of the trainers and consequently created disengagement of participants due to vague instructions subsequently affecting negatively the desired level of learning and possibly effective transfer of training into the workplace by front-line employees. Another influential factor affecting negatively the trainer's performance relates to the inappropriate use of the training venue. Being in the wrong training environment affects the delivery of the training content, increases the speed of delivery, and elevates trainer's stress levels. Consequently, incorrect training venues can affect negatively the trainers' performance resulting in decreased amount of learning by participants and according to Reid and Barrington (1999), Biech (2005), and Siddons (2003) training venues form part of the training environment and have a great influence on the facilitation of training as well as on the learning of participants.

#### *Future improvements*

Overall, this study reveals that even though the L&D department is effective there is still room for improvement. The main actions taken or planned in the future to improve the training function in the organisation refer to the amelioration of training strategy, utilization of adequate resources, enhancement of quality of training hours, allocation of financial resources for all level employees, change of learning style to blended learning, change of L&D role to a consultant role, increase benchmarking, align training activities with other

properties, increase and upgrade the competencies of trainers, increase manpower and training facilities for the L&D department, increase training budget, request for greater involvement by line-management, implement a coaching training session for line-management, and increase line-managers' awareness of training policies and availability of training tools.

## **Theme II – Adequacy of training environment and provision of training.**

The second theme incorporates subthemes such as training programs, weaknesses of training programs, methods, and techniques used to deliver training programs and post-training.

### *Nature of training programmes*

The findings of this study reveal that unfortunately, the nature of training programmes is basic and repetitive and it is a challenge even though the training programs are planned and communicated through the annual training calendar to avoid unnecessary duplications of courses. In addition, the planning and length of training programmes is determined based on the relevance and identification of key courses by looking into the training content and types of training, hotel business levels, JD power, and leading quality standards (LQS) scores, and HODs feedback. Moreover, every training intervention is initiated and planned for a specific reason consistent with the work of Bahlis (2008). Bahlis (2008) argued that training interventions could address a number of areas such as compliance/mandatory training, addressing lack of performance, improving productivity, reducing errors, reducing operating costs, reducing number of personnel, or introducing new processes or equipment. The results of the current study show that the amount of training provided to front-line employees also reflects on the number of trainers available in each L&D department, assessment of occupational training needs, and effectiveness of each training programme.

### *Weaknesses of training programmes*

The current study shows that despite the human capital investment for front-line employees there are existing weaknesses in training. Weak areas include the slow development of trainers, lack of benchmarking, language barriers of front-line employees affecting their participation and understanding levels of the training content, and the use of very traditional training programmes mainly delivered in a classroom set up with lack of blended flexibility

as a method of delivery. These weaknesses in the training programmes also mean that these are areas of improvement and coincide with Harris and Bonn (2000), who argued that the industry is in need of improvement when it comes to training. So for instance, outdated material was evident during the ‘telephone skills’ training based on company statistical information of 2005 where the trainer could have used more recent statistics to share with the participants. However, L&D management has already addressed these areas of concerns to the corporate team of the organisation, which has resulted in the creation of a full-time position at the L&D group level to review and remove any irrelevant, out-of-date, and duplication of training programs.

In addition, the results of the study indicate that measuring training interventions is another weakness including lack of calculating ROI, lack of assessment and evaluation, lack of review and follow up of employees’ skills transferability and close monitor of employees’ work performance. Basically, these findings support the work of Baum (2002), Des Monk and Ryding (2007), and Lashley (2009) who concluded that in the hospitality industry there is an immense lack of quality evaluation efforts when it comes to training. This study is also in line with the CIPD (2011) survey showing that the evaluation of learning and talent development is an overlooked area by organisations. Therefore, taking the TKM model and applying the results of this study it is evident that Level 2-Learning of the TKM model is lacking and conducted minimally since there is no skill check either prior to the training or after the completion of training to assess if trainees’ skills are improved or not as per Kirkpatrick (1975) and Phillips (1994) recommendations. Only the ‘telephone skills’ programme assesses the learning of front-line employees through mystery calls. According to Kirkpatrick (1975) and Phillips (1994), regarding Level 3-Behavior of the TKM model which concentrates on whether the attained skills and knowledge are put into practice in the workplace and is normally measured at the workplace three months or more after training, the findings of this study show that follow-up and review is very weak. Only three programmes out of the eight had a follow up session and assessment one month after the training programme. Looking into the next level of the TKM model, Level 4- Results or final outcomes of training in regards to organisational goals, the study reveals that final outcomes of training interventions are measured within the company through customer satisfaction scores, decrease in customer complaints, increase in sales and revenue, decrease in wastage, decrease in accidents, and call conversion rate. Lastly, Kirkpatrick (1975) and Phillips

(1994), Level 5 of the TKM suggests that ROI of training should be measured and according to the results of this study ROI is not calculated at all, which is an alarming concern.

Regarding the issue of not calculating ROI, this finding is in line with Kline and Harris's (2008) study that highlighted that ROI should be calculated even though management perceptions towards the process is viewed as labour intensive and furthermore the process of calculating ROI requires energy in handling and computing the data. In addition, the current study emphasizes that main contributors for not calculating ROI is due to the lack of skills by the L&D managers to comprehend and collect the required data and lack of formulas to compute ROI supporting the work of Phillips (1997), who suggested that there are several barriers for HR professionals not calculating the return-on-investment. Also as per Warech and Tracey (2004), there is not a unique formula to compute the exact value of ROI.

Furthermore, the quality of training is perceived by managers as a weakness. Training quality is lacking due to the need for more knowledgeable trainers, quantity of training hours, and lack of benchmarking with the main focus on evaluation and improvements of training. The lack of benchmarking in regards to learning and growth against the competitive set is a finding consistent with the work of Kaplan and Norton (1996), and Evans (2005) who suggested that hotels could further improve the innovation and learning perspective by using efficiently the Balanced Score Card (BSC).

Moreover, the use of the BSC in regards to the learning and growth dimension could assist managers to look into areas by comparing results in terms of employees' satisfaction with learning, impact on employees' job performance, impact on organisational performance, and ROI. According to McPhail *et al's*. (2008) study it was noted that hotel companies have not yet adopted the BSC in a systematic manner and managers lack an understanding of the BSC framework and its full potential.

In addition, the current research found that the L&D function is under-resourced, lacks adequate training facilities, and is under-financed that impacts negatively the training interventions to a certain extent. This supports the findings of Baum (2002), Des Monk and Ryding (2007), and Lashley (2009), who have concluded that in the hospitality industry there is a lack of adequate resources in regards to training.



Lastly, the language barrier of front-line employees is another weak area impacting negatively the quality of training programmes, thus supporting the findings of Lee and Chon (2000), who argued that language barriers frequently cause communication issues in the workplace, due to the cultural diversity of employees. In this study, it is revealed that poor English proficiency of front-line employees cause communication issues not only in the workplace, as suggested by Madera *et al.* (2012), but also during the training programmes, affecting and lowering front-line employees' participation, engagement, and learning due to their limited understanding and speaking abilities of the English language. Furthermore, this study found that the language barrier of trainees also challenges the trainers who cannot assess the learning of participants, therefore influencing the achievement of the programmes' expected learning outcomes.

Another weak area of training is the lack of review and of follow up after an instructor-led programme influencing and reducing learning, as well as transfer of training, which defeats the final goal of training. As Berry and Morris (2005) argued the main aim of effective training is the practical transfer of it to the workplace but, as argued by Holton and Baldwin (2000) and Kupritz (2002), approximately only 10 per cent of learning is actually reflected in improved job performance. These findings also support Frash *et al.*'s. (2010) study who suggested that trainers admit they have no verification about the training impact on the way employees perform their job duties. On the other hand, if proper review and follow up is conducted numerous benefits can be identified. According to the studies of Richman-Hirsch (2001), and Fitz-Enz and Davidson (2002), by doing so companies are able to examine more than just training learning outcomes and concentrate on the individual outcomes as well, consisting of increase in employees' self-esteem; self-efficacy; performance evaluations; merit increases along with business performance outcomes such as profitability; revenue enhancement; customer service; and shareholder value.

Post training, or also known as training transfer, was also identified as a training weakness. Even though front-line employees apply the new skills in the work environment, transfer of training in the workplace is not assessed and evaluated and not properly measured through performance management due to weak reviews and follow up, reflecting on the lack of reinforcement towards learning continuation. Based on the observations only three training programmes had a follow up scheduled and for the remaining five training programmes was non-existent which shows that it is a major weak point. These areas are identified also as

areas of improvement and lack of performance measurement is perceived by L&D managers as a challenge, since it also influences negatively the achievement of shorter goals for the organisation. According to the literature employees' job performance, skills, and behaviours taught during training have to be transferred to the workplace, preserved over time and generalized across contexts (Holton & Baldwin, 2003) which in this case are very hard to track due to ineffective job performance evaluations and follow up. Hence, the L&D department trainers, as well as departmental trainers need to take accountability for overlooking such an important area, in order to be able to further prove the worth of their work and the programmes run so to maximize training effectiveness in line with the recommendations made by Becker *et al.* (2001), and Fitz-Enz and Davidson (2002).

#### *Methods and techniques used to deliver training programmes*

The findings reveal that most learning is carried out through formal on-the-job training followed by formal training such as classroom training, supporting the work of Conrade *et al.* (1994) who identified that the type of training preferred by managers in hospitality companies is on-the-job training and the work of Jameson (2000) and Riley *et al.* (2002) who also argued that the hospitality industry is heavily dependent on on-the-job training. Nevertheless, Conrade *et al.*'s. (1994) study brought up the issue that employees subjected to on-the-job training might not be receiving quality training since it is influenced by who is conducting the training. His study demonstrated that 38 per cent of training is conducted by a supervisor or manager, 35 per cent by another employee and 27 per cent by a group of other employees. Based on the findings of this study, on-the-job training is conducted primarily by departmental trainers, which support the work of Poulston (2008) who concluded that on-the-job training is an effective method when trained facilitators are conducting it. Moreover, it is evident from this research that on-the-job training is delivered by other employees depending heavily on the buddy system which, according to Conrade *et al.* (1994), is not as effective and successful as when a supervisor or a manager train employees since they are more apt to deliver the type of service required by the organisation. Similarly, Poulston (2008, p.421) argued that using the buddy system is perceived as a "*cheap substitute*". Nevertheless, the findings of this study coincide with the findings of the CIPD (2011) Learning and Talent Development - Annual Survey Report reporting that on-the-job, in-house development programmes, instructor-led training delivered off the job, mentoring and buddying schemes are the most effective learning and development practices for manual employees, and in this study front-line employees represent that group.

Furthermore, the research found that informal learning is the weakest area and according to the training typologies suggested by Le-Ross and Pryce (2010) this study shows that formal on-the-job training is mainly used followed by informal off-the job, but still lacking behind is the informal on-the-job training and formal off-the-job for front-line employees. Interestingly, Paradise (2008) argued that informal learning is crucial since knowledge obtained through informal learning and channels is comparable to that obtained through traditional formal methods. Hence, the hotels could increase informal learning with email emerging, use of company's intranet, Google searches, and knowledge transfer through employee-driven podcasting, placement of television in common areas, reliance on internal wikis, regular lunches of teams together in order to keep ideas and experiences fresh, as suggested by Paradise (2008). However, the initiative to increase learning is taken on board by one of the hotels (Hotel C) which considers supporting informal learning and increasing employees' communication by designing a new staff restaurant and placing computers. By doing so, employees can access the intranet and internet during their break times, and creates a relaxed environment aiming to enhance employees' communication and allowing employees to share their experiences during meal times with the main purpose to increase informal learning in the workplace.

The use of presentation and hands-on methods are mainly used with no use at all of group or team-building methods, which is worrying. According to the literature the training techniques mainly refer to on-the-job training (hands-on method), classroom (presentation method), E-learning (hands-on method) and blended learning (hands-on method). This study shows that the hotels use an instructor-led classroom technique for delivering a wide range of training such as induction training, job specific operational procedures training, improvement training, attitudinal and inspirational training, and mandatory training. As it is noticeable, a lot of missed opportunities exist since there is no real blending of training methods for the effective delivery of the programmes and hence restricting trainers' creativity when it comes to the use of multiple training methods.

It has to be noted though that trainers used different resources/aids to deliver the programmes such as whiteboards, flipcharts, presentations, visual displays, and audio supporting the findings of Rae (2002) who has argued that trainers should use multiple resources to communicate the training content to the audience. Nonetheless, it was revealed that not all

aids were effectively used due to IT issues or even incorrect font size of the presentations. Consequently, resources/aids that are not tested prior to the training programmes by the trainers' impact negatively the delivery of training programmes and according to Rae (2002) one of the key competencies trainers should have is programme preparation skills.

These findings also reveal that the least used training techniques according to L&D managers refer to assessment and development centres, simulations, project based, use of scripts and role-plays, coaching, and mentoring. In addition, blended learning, E-learning and on-the-job are identified as areas for improvement and actions have been taken already in the company regarding the implementation of blended learning. Based on the training observations, the study shows that acquisition of learning was primarily assessed through Q&A sessions. However, during the 'welcome programme' and the 'task trainer workshop' learning was assessed based on demonstration by the participants, which is a very effective technique to assess the level of learning and understanding of trainees and should be further utilized in other training programmes.

In line with the Training Top 125 report (Training Magazine, 2011) the statistics showed that, 3,500 employees are trained via E-learning through self-study modules and that approximately 96 per cent of organisations possess an information technology infrastructure to take care of the delivery and management of training. However, the findings of this study indicate that even if the company provides its employees with E-learning through 'CLICKS' which is the IT learning platform offering on-line courses available for employees to use, the weaknesses reflect the lack of system management and lack of training of employees to use 'CLICKS' in order to initiate their own training and learning. In line with the findings of Collins *et al.*, (2003) who argued that the main disadvantages of E-learning refer to the up-keeping of the system, the required set up so that all employees can have access to the system, additional training for employees who are not so technologically advanced and proper evaluation and completion of courses according to employees' needs. However, as suggested by Sigala (2002) E-learning is not based only in the use of Web-based technologies or distance learning, but it is a way used to exchange information within an organisation. Therefore, it could include learning strategies and technologies ranging from online courses, CD-ROMs, DVDs to videoconferencing (Sigala, 2002). Consequently, this study highlights the need of reinforcing E-learning. Companies must assess its advantages such as offering the learner the capability to suitably fit training into his or her schedule, low cost (Murphy, 2001; Macpherson *et al.*, 2005), easy access, and ease of keeping material up to date,

productivity enhancement and quality improvement (Rosenberg, 2000; Sarmento, 2010), increased motivation (Sarmento, 2010) and eliminating the need to put together print manuals (Collins *et al.*, 2003). In addition as Collins *et al.*, (2003) concluded E-learning is valuable for the hotel industry due to high turnover rates and through on-line training companies could retain and educate their workforce. This study shows that hotels do offer online courses through the company's intranet to all employees, primarily in the areas of IT, business, and soft skills supporting the work of Kim *et al.*, (2011) who argued that an increase in the use of E-learning to train soft skills in the hospitality industry is noticeable and in line with the Training Industry Report (2011) showing that mandatory or compliance training continues to be conducted primarily online, followed by desktop application training and IT systems, and minimum used for the enhancement of customer service skills training, executive development, and interpersonal skills training. For instance, the hotels offering IT on-line courses aim to enhance the IT skills of employees' by providing courses related to the Microsoft Office Suite and furthermore dividing these courses into levels ranging from basic to advance.

In addition, the hotels provide on-line business courses and soft skills training such as: Taking a Manager Role, Essentials of Interviewing and Hiring: Conducting an Effective Interview, Managing Your Career, amongst others. These findings contradict Green's (2005) study which concluded that E-learning is more applicable for mandatory training and according to Hanrahan (2007), E-learning is used for food safety and alcoholic beverage sales whereas these areas could be incorporated in the future in the E-learning platform of the hotels.

### **Theme III- Challenges of training.**

This theme ranked third which formed a new dimension in the suggested training model since it influences directly the training environment and the provision of training. This theme includes subthemes such as availability of resources, recruitment, workforce composition, past work experience, and employee skills deficiencies.

#### *Availability of resources*

The current study reveals that the availability of resources reflects the insufficient investment in the L&D department compared to the financial investment towards other initiatives within the organisation. Also under resourced areas in regards to staffing and facilities of the L&D

department, and the high cost of training are negatively influenced which supports the work of Woods (2003) who concluded that training for hotel employees was under-funded disagreeing though with the fact that training was a neglected area by many hoteliers. This research found that major involvement of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the company guarantees recognition and supports the L&D role and functions. The company's CEO has a very strong belief in HCI benefiting not only the organisation but its employees as well. On his view employees are considered assets of the organisation, supporting the work of Takeuchi *et al.* (2007), Wayne *et al.* (1997), and Allen *et al.* (2003) who argued that organisations investing in training view employees as important for the survival and success of the organisation and show recognition of employee contributions. In contrast to past literature, this study supports that overall there is sufficient investment in L&D as per the results of the benchmarking report against the competitive set of other five star hotels in Dubai. Consequently, it was strongly held by L&D managers that hotels in Dubai invest higher in human capital compared to other Western international cities but still they want to see more money been allocated in the departmental budget.

#### *Recruitment challenges*

The current study indicates that recruitment is a main challenge. It influences the training environment and the provision of training because of the existing practices of recruitment and selection methods adopted by the HR department. This finding supports the work of Jameson (2000) who argued that there is a strong relationship between training and recruitment and the work of Capelli (2004) who argued that in labour markets where main challenges are associated with skills shortages and mismatches, education and training could be the solutions to the problems. In the case of five star hotels in Dubai, this study supports the findings of Amaize *et al.* (2011) who argued that there is a lack of skilled and qualified graduates in the tourism and hospitality industry, since only six institutions in the country offer specialized educational programmes (Amaize *et al.*, 2011). It also supports the work of Stauss (2004) who argued that labour is a main challenge in the hotel sector since 80 per cent of the workforce is expatriates and labour migrants and in the entire country the hospitality sector employed 291,500 in 2013 (Bouyarmourn & Sahoo, 2014). Based on the Labour Force Survey (2011) Dubai employed a total of 57,919 individuals in hotels and restaurants and of those only 172 were Emiratis and the rest, 57,747, were non-Emiratis. These figures highlight the great dependence of ex-pats and labour migrants in the industry and on the other hand it

mirrors the lack of interest as well as reluctance of Emiratis joining the hospitality industry and perceiving it as a professional career.

Furthermore, another challenge associated with recruitment and selection is the fact that employees are selected based on attitude and not skills supporting the findings of Kusluvan *et al.* (2010) who argued that employee personality seems to be growing in importance as a decisive selection factor for tourism and hospitality organisations due to its role in employee performance and service performance. Nevertheless, the findings show that selected employees lack past work experience, which is a challenge. Primarily due to employees' lack of past experiences in a luxury hotel environment and lack of luxury service delivery supporting the findings of Rowley and Purcell (2001) who have concluded that due to skills shortages in the hospitality industry recruitment and filling in vacancies becomes harder. In addition, this study supports the findings of Riley *et al.* (2002) who suggested that lack of skills, it is not an obstacle for the labour force to enter the industry, since the nature of skills for front-line non managerial employees can be easily learnt on the job. Besides, this study also found that another drawback is that the provision of training interventions to new recruits then becomes time consuming and basic. As Baum (1993), and Vujic *et al.* (2008) argued this is evident in developing countries with low levels of education and minimum local labour force, which is a pure reflection of this study not so much in the education levels but certainly in the minimal attraction of the local labour force. The results of this study also support the findings of Johnson (2002) who argued that a need for training is triggered by drivers such as the recruitment of new staff and in line with Davidson *et al.*'s. (2011) and Johnson's (2002) findings who discussed that training assists in the foundation of skills development so that employees possess the adequate skills to perform effectively and meet service standards. Overall, the main reasons associated with the skills gaps of front-line employees consist of lack of work experience in newcomers and recruitment issues faced by five star hotels in Dubai.

Moreover, another challenge associated with recruitment is the attraction of suitable candidates to Dubai and competition of other hotel companies recruiting from the same foreign labour markets, supporting Enz's (2009) findings based on a worldwide survey with 243 lodging managers who found that attraction of suitable employees is a major concern and together with Cannon and Gustafson's (2002) work and McCabe and Savery's (2007) work who argued in various ways that labour shortages in the hospitality industry occur due to

factors such as the demographics of workforce, low wages, competition from better paying industries, low perception of service culture, perceived lack of education needed and perceived lack of career opportunities. Closely looking into the case of hotels in Dubai, this study supports the findings of Issa (2006) that countries such as Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nepal and the Philippines export manpower to Dubai and even though the government has signed labour exchange agreements with accredited recruitment offices to restrict an incoming unskilled workforce it is still a major issue. This debate is also supported by Hjalager and Andersen (2001) who argued that one of tourism employment characteristics is the nature of the labour market, and that employment strategies to a certain extent reflect the lack of access to labour with a relevant background of the industry. In addition, this study shows that there is a gender imbalance, and one of the main recruitment drives is to increase the number of female employees across all hotel departments, since in Dubai, the hospitality industry is very male dominant in contrast with the work of Davies *et al.* (2001) who concluded that in Western Australia most operational roles are occupied by female employees.

Consequently, the diversity and the origin of front-line employees are also taken into consideration and are viewed as a challenge but during recruitment and selection the focus is not on origin and languages but primarily on individuals attitudes, supporting the work of Gallardo *et al.* (2010) who argued that the hospitality industry is a people-oriented service and therefore the abilities, behaviour, and attitudes of employees have become the foundation of every business. Furthermore, the current study found that focus is also given to the mind-sets and ambitions of applicants bringing into light a new aspect associated with the selection of front-line employees in five star hotels in Dubai.

The findings of this study evidence that recruitment and selection of front-line employees influences the training provision further exacerbating the need to tailor the training programmes by ensuring that there is the right provision of courses offered at the right time. Ultimately, recruitment processes further influence training due to the lengthy process of applying for work permits, labour cards, medicals, and residence visas of employees in the UAE supporting the work of Kemp (2011) who discussed the on-boarding process as being a major task of the HR department . The entire process takes between 30 to 45 days and therefore the L&D department has to adjust the training and all associated activities in terms of resources, time, and cost allocation.



### *Workforce composition*

What is equally important to impacting recruitment drives is the diverse workforce composition in five star hotels in Dubai. The demographics of front-line employees show they are mainly from South-East Asian countries, followed by Asia Subcontinent countries, Central Asia, Russia and CIS countries, Western and Eastern European countries, Middle Eastern and Arabic speaking countries. This supports similar findings of the Labour Force Survey (2011) illustrating that employees in the service and sales sector in Dubai are mainly from Asian countries (Non-Arab), followed by other Middle Eastern and North African countries. Ultimately, the diverse workforce creates training challenges due to language barriers, especially low levels of English in verbal, written and comprehension ability. Likewise, these results support the work of Powers (1992), Madera (2011), and Jackson (2008) who argued that even though the hospitality industry is one of the biggest employers of immigrants, problems have arisen due to language barriers especially the lack of English proficiency amongst immigrant employees. Even though this study found that the hotels are providing intense English programmes to all employees, the drawback is that it is time consuming since it takes 18 classes to complete each level. Based on the results of employees' English assessments, front-line employees should be at level 3, which equates to intermediate level of English proficiency. Knowledge of English is paramount due to employees' face-to-face interactions with an international clientele and even more for increased performance and development of communication skills, which affects relationships amongst employees, management, and customers. This supports the findings of Madera (2011) who argued that employers who pay for language classes seemed to have increased employee satisfaction and higher performance and as per the report on Employee benefits (2011) conducted by the SHRM only 8 per cent out of 594 organisations provide ESL (English as a second language classes).

### *Employee skills deficiencies*

Employee skills deficiencies are also seen as a major challenge for the hotel operations. Ultimately, employee deficiencies refer to language barriers, lack of skills, poor F&B service skills, lack of product knowledge, weak selling techniques, and unstructured ways of working, leading to poor service delivery, customer dissatisfaction, and service failure, impacting negatively hotels' economic performance and bottom line. Similarly supporting Tantawy and Losekoot (2000) results who argued that bad service quality is a main reason for

customer complaints followed by bad staff attitude and bad product quality. This study also supports the work of Pratten (2003) who argued that lack of F&B skills, ways of working, poor handwriting, poor attention on placing orders, lack of alertness in delivering the food to the customer tables amongst other F&B related skills deficiencies lead to slow service, increase in customer complaints resulting in low performance by front-line staff. These deficiencies reflect on the low understanding of waitressing jobs, inadequate training, and lack of job-related experience. Even though Dubai is a developing tourist destination and depends heavily on the hospitality sector, it is apparent that front-line employees are lacking essential skills to deliver this luxury service to its international clientele. In turn it is perceived as a major challenge faced by hoteliers supporting the findings of Baum (2002) who argued that developing countries depend on an alternative economy such as hospitality or tourism which is based on low skills. This study also supports the findings of Hai-yan and Baum (2006) who argued that in the case of China being a developing tourist destination low quality and skills of employees was a major problematic area.

#### **Theme IV- Employee benefits.**

This theme ranked fourth supporting the dimension of the suggested training model. This theme includes subthemes such as career growth, employees' dissatisfaction with career progression, benefits linked to attitude and behaviour, and benefits linked to knowledge, skills, and abilities.

##### *Benefits of training linked to the development of soft, hard, and aesthetic skills.*

The results of the study support that hotels do train employees for the enhancement and development of hard, soft, and aesthetic skills resulting in a number of employee benefits supporting past studies of numerous scholars who argued that front-line employees should possess multiple skills due to the nature of their jobs (Kelliher & Riley, 2000). Pratten (2003), Lundberg and Mossberg (2008), and Burns (1997) argued that hard skills are associated with the technical performance of hospitality work that a frontline employee needs to execute a function to established standards. What is equally important is the acquisition of soft skills which are associated with the attitudinal aspects of work and emotional labour (Baum, 2006; Burns, 1997; Becton & Graetz, 2001; Lashley, 2009; Lemmick & Mattsson, 2002; Lundberg & Mossberg, 2008) as well as the acquisition of aesthetic skills which are associated with employees' personal presentation and appearance (Lundberg & Mossberg, 2008). For instance, the hotels offered the following training programmes aiming to enhance a set of

skills either hard, either soft, either aesthetic or a combination of them. 'Telephone skills' was offered to increase the telephone skills of front-line employees and their communication skills hence training was based on the development of hard and aesthetic skills. 'LQA' was offered as a refresher course to improve quality standards hence training was based on the development of soft skills. 'Praise me reload' to enhance generic skills related to the development of hard skills. 'Creating memorable experiences' to develop customer service skills related to the development of soft skills. 'Task Trainer Workshop' to enhance training skills and develop trainers related to the development of hard skills. Lastly, 'Who moved my cheese' to change attitude related to the development of soft skills.

*Benefits of training linked to front-line employees' career growth.*

The present study shows that one of the main benefits for hotels training front-line employees are career growth and employee progression because of human capital investment. Career growth and employee progression has a direct impact on employees and it also forms part of the succession planning of the hotels supporting the work of Wang *et al.* (2011) and Somerville (2007) who concluded that training opportunities assist employees' career development. Despite the fact that there is high employee satisfaction with the training provision, this study also found a contradictory finding. Negativity was expressed in regards to lack of career opportunities, lack of access to employees' professional growth, false career promises given by management, lack of transparency, and lack of internal talent promotion leading to high employee dissatisfaction with career progression. Consequently, opposing the findings of Wang *et al's.*, (2011) study who argued that if employees receive more training opportunities, the opportunities for career progression might be greater. Furthermore, it was evident that the rate of internal promotions is unknown by the L&D department which is a challenge and also highlights a strong preference in external recruitment vs. internal recruitment further exacerbating the fact that if lower level employees are ignored, then organisations face a loss of talent and increase costs (Dalgaard, 2008).

The findings reveal that lack of career opportunities and lack of access to employees' professional growth support the work of Hai-yan and Baum (2006). Their study concluded that in the Chinese hotel sector front-office employees intentions to stay in front-office occupations are lower due to unclear career progression and lack of promotion opportunities because of unstructured employment and professional development systems, lack of guidance and career path, lack of information on how to reach their future goals and career plans.

Moreover, this study also supports Chen *et al.*'s. (2004) findings that concluded that organisations not providing career development programmes that fulfil the career needs of employees, encounter high levels of dissatisfaction with employees' work attitudes such as organisational commitment and job-satisfaction.

*Benefits linked to attitude and behaviour of front-line employees.*

The results of this study reveal that another reason for training is changing employees' attitude and behaviour which is encouraged mainly through the provision of attitudinal and inspirational training, reflecting on the benefits of human capital investment related to the enhancement of employees' 'soft' skills. Employees' benefits linked to attitude and behaviour is part of the company's values in regards to training and development initiatives, and it is further perceived as outcomes of effective training in line with Bulut and Culha (2010) who concluded that companies offering opportunities of training to develop skills, behaviours and attitudes of employees encounter higher organisational commitment. Consistent with the work of Basset-Jones and Lloyd (2005), Baum (2006), Bontis *et al.* (2002), Becton and Graetz (2001), Kusluvan *et al.* (2010), Lashley (2009), Lemmick and Mattsson (2002), Lundberg and Mossberg (2008), and Sahinidis and Bouris (2008), this study also indicates that training has a positive impact on employees' values, attitude, and motivation. In addition, human capital investment increases employees' rapport with managers and the team, and leads to positive affectivity of employees consistent with the work of Buckley and Caple (2008). The findings of this study also show that training has a positive impact on job satisfaction supporting the work of Pool and Pool (2007) and Bartlett (2001), and positive impact on guest service delivery as well as on organisational performance supporting the work of Chiang *et al.* (2005), Garlick (2010), Kusluvan (2003), and Sommerville (2007).

*Benefits linked to KSA of front-line employees.*

The results of the study reveal that another reason for training is to improve employees' KSA leading to numerous positive outcomes supporting the work of McClelland (2002), and Tai (2006) who argued that in the hospitality industry competences are related to employees' knowledge, skills and thoughts. As in McClelland's (2002) study, the current study also demonstrates that the level of service quality and ultimately the economic performance of the company are dependent on employees' qualities contributing towards the hotel's success, growth, and expansion. The results of this study show that because of training there is an

increase in employees' confidence level in selling, increase in product knowledge and awareness, increase in communication skills. Numerous authors have also suggested these benefits because of training such as the work of Belt *et al.* (2002), Grandey (2003), Lemmick and Mattsson (2002), and Victorino *et al.* (2008). Another benefit is the increase in customer satisfaction supporting the work of Lin and Mattila (2010), and Karatepe and Uludag (2008), as well as the improvement of English language skills supporting the work of Cutting (2012) and overall increase in employees competencies supporting the work of McClelland (2002) and Valera and García (2006). Front-line employees' intellectual and physical abilities are also increased as a result of training supporting the work of Brownell (2003), Robbins and Judge (2009), Sims (2004), and Somerville (2007).

### **Theme V- Organisational benefits.**

This theme ranked fifth and formed part of a new dimension in the suggested training model. This theme includes subthemes such as benefits linked to company, benefits linked to customers, and benefits linked to employees.

#### *Benefits of HCI linked to the company.*

The results of this study show that investing in HC and more precisely investing in on and off-the-job training is a competitive strategy to generate sustainable business growth supporting Baruch's (2004), Hudson *et al.*'s. (2004), and Butcher *et al.*'s. (2009) studies that highlighted that training is even more crucial for hospitality and tourism companies. Moreover, companies which are adopting their own training philosophy by re-enforcing training as part of the organisation's strategy result in a stronger position against competitors, increases company's prosperity, and leads to company's success.

Training is crucial for the company's wealth in line with the findings of Bulut and Culha (2010), Cannon and Gustafson (2002), McClelland (2002), Heskett *et al.* (1994), Hinkin and Tracey (2000), and Phillips (2003). The above mentioned authors argued that training offers a unique advantage affecting a company's overall financial performance and profitability and in line with the work of Bassi and McMurrer (2004) and Dela Cruz (2004) who have argued that investing in training results on greater returns of performance indicators such as shareholder return.

In addition, the findings evidences that human capital investment increases the reputation of the hotels within the hotel sector in Dubai and its competitiveness supporting the work of Slåtten *et al.* (2011) and Nadeem (2010) who argued that competitiveness depends on the company's reputation for excellence. Based on this current study, the positive impact of human capital investment can be seen in terms of product, customers, employees, hotels' reputation, hotels' performance and hotels' reviews on social media which is a reflection of the three main hotels' targets: guest loyalty, employee loyalty, and profit.

Furthermore, the study findings reveal that training assists with opening of new hotel properties since front-line employees are fully trained, and hence, resulting in new work opportunities for existing staff. Moreover, the results of this study reveal that organisational goals are linked to learning and development activities, training is an integral part to the company success in line with the work of Owens (2006) who supported the notion that training affects job satisfaction, organisational commitment, as well as turnover reasons, which are all bound to organisational success.

Alignment of service, keeping up standards, and reputation emphasizing quality are results of training and these findings are in line with the work of Arms (2012) and Taner (2001) who argued that in the service sector companies with strong beliefs in quality service and commitment in employee training regarding service standards assist to achieve high quality and value. In line with the findings of Baydoun *et al.* (2001), Campos-Soria *et al.* (2005), Hoque (2000), and Somerville (2007), this study also found that the process by which training is organized and initiated is crucial in verifying performance outcomes such as customer service quality and personalized service, having a direct impact on the hotels' profitability. Consistent with the work of Cairncross and Kelly (2008), this study also found that training assists the provision of luxury service which preserves brand integrity, increases brand awareness worldwide, and assists in continuous hotel expansion.

#### *Benefits of HCI linked to customers.*

Moreover, benefits associated as a result of human capital investment through training reflect on customers in terms of guest loyalty, repeat customers, increased guest satisfaction, happy customers, and creation and provision of best guest experiences. In line with the findings of Heskett *et al.* (1994), and Somerville (2007) benefits to the organisations as a result of training increases external service value comprising of customer satisfaction and customer

loyalty. The findings of this study are also in line with Taner's (2001) study in the service sector who argued that customer satisfaction is dependent on the service and that bad experiences can result in loss of customers and negative word-of-mouth. The hotels do provide customer service training to its front-line employees and also run a loyalty programme for their customers supporting the work of Rowden and Conine (2005), nevertheless, the hotels do not offer face and name recall training which according to Magnini & Honeycutt (2005) this type of training is crucial for organisations who seek repeat customers through loyalty programs. In addition, the results of this study show that the provision of best guest experiences is a result of training. Consistent with the work of Lin and Matilla (2010), and Tsaur and Lin (2004) who showed that there is a positive relationship between training being either on-the-job and/or off-the-job and employee service behaviour due to positive HRM practices which lead to employees' behaviour being more positive, polite, caring towards customers and leads to higher service consciousness scores on average. Nevertheless, the study findings reveal that the hotels provide programmes for front-line employees on how to smile and behave but there is a lack of training provision when it comes to anticipating customer needs and wants and being able to react in such a way in order to fulfil these unexpected requests.

#### *Benefits of HCI linked to employees.*

Lastly, benefits as a result of HCI through training reflect on employees in terms of creation of development opportunities, employee growth, increase of employees' skills and competencies, happy employees, employee loyalty and retention, employee empowerment, and employee engagement and hence highlighting the internal service value of the company supporting the work of Heskett *et al.* (1994). According to the findings of this study the creation of development opportunities lead to increased employee satisfaction and performance supporting the work of Aggarwal and Bhargava (2011), Bakker *et al.*, (2012), and Madera (2011). The hotels do measure employee satisfaction together with HC through the colleague opinion survey supporting the findings of the Training Magazine (2011) showing that around 93 per cent of organisations made use of employee satisfaction surveys. Furthermore, this study supports the work of Chiang *et al.* (2005) who showed that training quality and employee satisfaction should be measured together to assess the impact of training quality on employees' intention to stay within the organisation. In line with the findings of Cannon and Gustafson (2002), this study also finds that increased training provision promotes a high degree of job satisfaction, which results into a higher retention

rate. Moreover, consistent with the work of Kelliher and Riley (2002), this study also found that the acquisition of multiple skills through training interventions could result in higher employee loyalty. Moreover, according and in line with the the work of Berta (2006), Mullen (2004), and Pfau and Kay (2002), training could result in increased employee satisfaction, sense of empowerment, underpinning employees' desire for further training as well as employee engagement in line with the work of Morton (2005) and Robbins and Judge (2009). Consequently, training can influence employees' retention level but is a challenging issue for the hotels' line-managers in Dubai supporting the work of Enz's (2009) who found that a major concern amongst 243 lodging managers worldwide is employee retention. In addition, this study confirms Jackson's (2008) study who argued that retention remains a problematic area in the hospitality industry. Consistent with the work of Hinkin and Tracey (2002), this study supports that employees' retention depends on effective HR practices and anticipation of employees' opportunities to grow and develop within the company which perceives employees as assets and strongly believes that human capital investment increases benefits for the entire organisation.

#### **Theme VI- Management support towards training.**

This theme ranked sixth supporting its dimension in the suggested training model. This theme embraces subthemes such as managers' role and individual development programs (IDPs).

##### *Line-management role.*

The findings of this study reveal that training is perceived as a low priority by line-management showing there is lack of commitment towards training interventions supporting the work of Chiang *et al.* (2005) who argued that management misjudged employees' expectations, wants and needs and hotels' actual training performance. In addition, the findings indicate that managers need to understand the benefits of human capital investment and its impact supporting the work of Watson (2008) who argued that managers should understand the benefits of training as positive outcomes reflected on the organisation, on employees' development, on employees' increased productivity, and on employees' improved performance.

Unfortunately, line- managers restrict employees' participation to trainings due to unexpected high business levels affecting negatively employees' motivation to training and ultimately organisational commitment backing up the work of Bulut and Culha (2010). The current



study shows that on occasions managers carry out the selection of front-line employees to attend training randomly. The reason is that line-managers want to meet their personal KPIs of sending front-line employees to training without looking and assessing employees' skills gaps, and readiness of employees to attend training programmes. These findings support the work of Bartlett and Kang (2004) who argued that employees' perceptions to attend organisational training can be influenced by department managers' decisions in regards to access to training and selective criteria of employees' participation in training programmes. Nevertheless, L&D managers agreed that the frequency of the courses reflects on the availability of the courses as well as on employees' IDPs, which in turn influence line-managers selection, opposing the study of Santos and Stuart (2003) who argued that the availability of the course triggers the nomination of an employee to attend.

Another area of concern is that line-managers do not follow up and do not provide constructive feedback to front-line employees hence making it difficult for front-line employees to apply and transfer training into the workplace. Similarly to the work of Lim and Johnson (2002), Santos and Stuart (2003), and Tharenou (2001), who argued that management support is positively correlated with transfer of training and opportunity to perform. As per the findings of this study, line-managers are lacking inspiration, coaching, feedback, and accountability of transfer of training. Frash *et al.* (2010), suggested that managers should allocate time during work-shifts to ensure that training content is been reviewed and training objectives are reinforced and even more according to Clarke (2002), managers should think through ways of adjusting their employees' usual workload to allow them to apply new skills and knowledge on the job to boost training transfer. Lack of accountability refers to line-managers not demanding that front-line employees apply the new acquisition of KSA and hence performance expectations are not well-defined and achievable, influencing compensation for the newly acquired skill-set. In line with the work of Frash *et al.* (2010), Kontoghiorges (2002), and Russ-Eft (2002), who argued that trainees who achieve the performance expectations through follow up and evaluation should be compensated accordingly. Furthermore, a clear distinction should be made between training as being a high priority for employees' growth and employees' promotion opportunities due to false promises given by line-managers to front-line employees reflecting on the existing power and politics of the organisation.

The results of this study evidences that financial support from HODs is needed to grant funding for training. Departmental influence is required towards the encouragement and culture of learning and can be driven by HODs due to their role as leaders. Hence, HODs need to believe in training and instil a culture in favour of the training interventions. Learning to be more empathetic towards training depends on the leader and it is perceived as a need in the current study.

In addition, management involvement in training is viewed as a managerial responsibility and it is crucial for the more specific, skills based training. Lack of departmental training i.e. on-the-job is a challenge and supports Becton's and Graetz's (2001) study who argued that internal methods such as on-the-job and mentoring are needed to upgrade the skills of employees. Moreover, it is evident that lack of departmental training also influences negatively the achievement of the company's shorter goals. However, follow up and commitment are areas that need further improvement. Granting time off to employees is a future action, and communication of business levels to the L&D department is crucial since it assists in determining the appropriate length and frequency of training programmes as well as facilitating time off to employees.

#### *Utilization of front-line employees IDPs.*

Furthermore, this current study demonstrates that IDPs are a tool representing individual needs and it is important for employees' skills development in line with Santos and Stuart (2003) who argued that the development of employees' skills is very important and essential to the company's economic performance. This study shows that in order to monitor employees' skills training, employees' IDPs are used to keep track of their training hours and attendance on training programmes. However, it is noted that a weak area relates to line-managers' lack of knowledge on how to effectively complete IDPs and therefore the L&D department has taken the additional responsibility of training line-managers on how to complete these plans appropriately. Furthermore, the L&D department facilitates training sessions for all employees in order to explain, highlight the importance of these plans and show the link between the IDPs and the appraisal forms through the 'Praise me reload' training programme.

### **Theme VII-Organisational support towards training.**

This theme ranked seventh supporting its existent dimension in the suggested training model. This theme contains subthemes such as investment and training curriculum.

### *Organisational support towards HCI.*

The findings reveal that there is high organisational support and financial investment towards training, even though the company invests heavily in other initiatives. Overall, there is a positive organisational belief in employees' human capital investment and consequently high importance is given to the training budget. The findings reveal there is a great, highly and essential value of training and development to the performance of the organisation supporting the work of Bulut and Culha (2010). The current study found that investment in training is linked to organisational values and is associated with the positive treatment of human capital within the organisation. Training is also linked to organisational objectives which show that the company values training and development interventions since there is a direct impact on business performance. The study found that in order to ensure the achievement of short-term goals the creation of tailor made courses that are very specific is one action taken by the hotels in line with Noe *et al.* (2010) who have discussed that companies are moving towards high-leverage training which is linked to the strategic business goals and objectives. Moreover, the results show that long term goals are associated with the yearly objectives which are an integral part of the company's success; consequently staff training is part of the organisations' five big plans supporting the work of Buckley and Caple (2008).

### *Training curriculum*

The results indicate that the design of the training curriculum represents the organisational needs and it is considered crucial supporting the work of Jameson (2000), and Bartlett and Kang (2004). Consequently, each hotel has to follow the company's training curriculum aiming to meet individual hotel goals.

## **Theme VIII-Human Capital Investment.**

This theme ranked last although supporting its existence in the suggested training model. This theme contains subthemes such as the training philosophy and significance of training.

### *Training philosophy.*

The results of this study strongly suggest that the company values training, learning, and development. The company's training philosophy is supported by inspiration, by making a difference, by the impact of learning's contribution towards the organisational success, by the capital investment in employees, and ultimately by the end results associated with succession

planning. These findings are in line with Mahroum (2007) who argued that HC management is related to the ability to develop talent, to use talent and to attract talent from another place. Nevertheless, this study contradicts the last point since HC is associated more with attracting talent from within company even though it was mentioned previously that internal promotions are not been tracked by the L&D department.

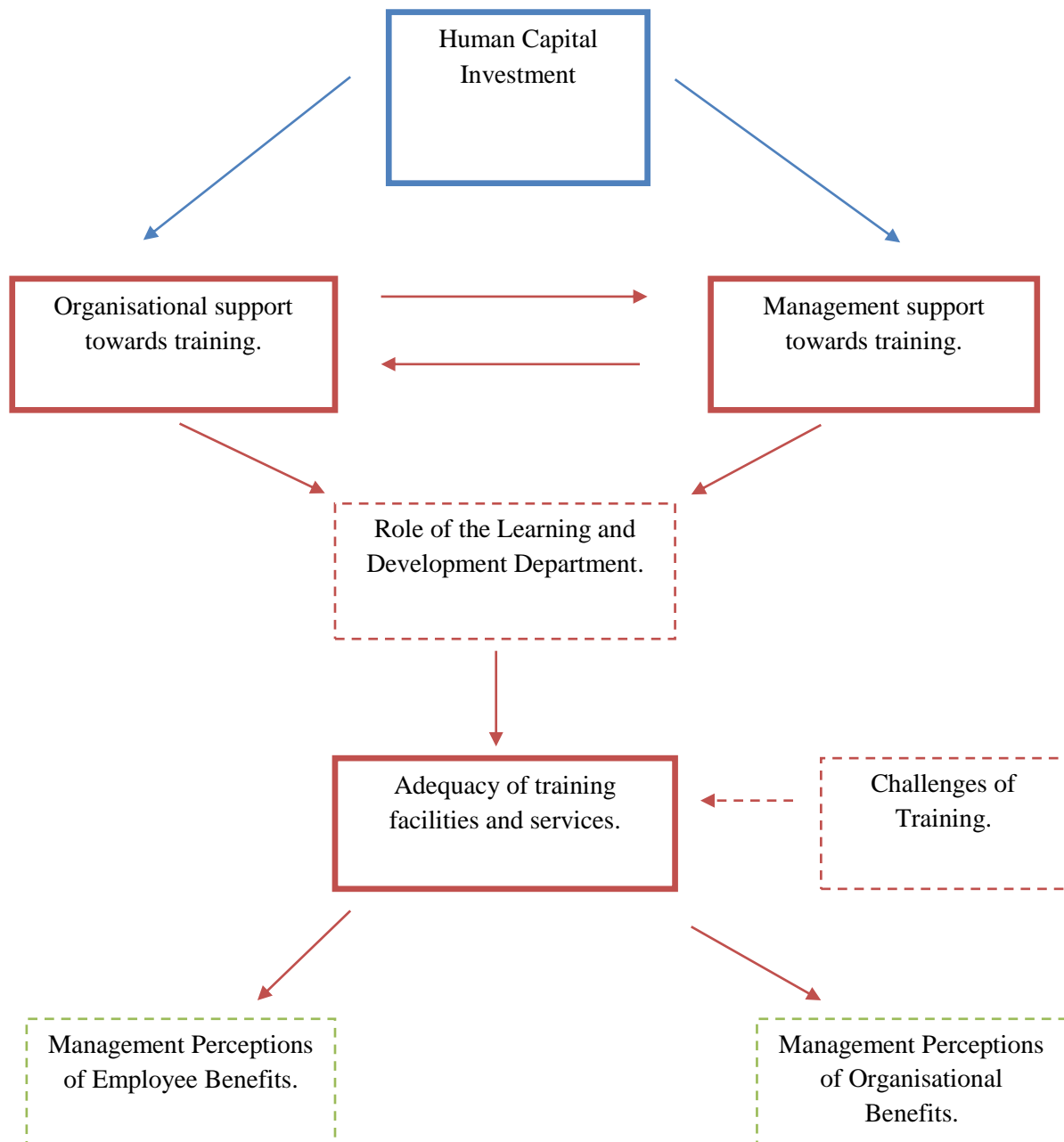
#### *Significance of training.*

Eventually, a strong emphasis is given to front-line employee's continuous growth, creation of learning opportunities, and provision of the right skills supporting past scholars who have addressed the benefits of human capital investment from an employer's perspective (Aliaga, 2001; Becker, 1993; Blundell *et al.*, 1999; Sturman, 2001).

However, despite all the efforts towards human capital investment the findings strongly suggest that ROI is not computed in the hotels because they do not have the means to calculate ROI or because the measures in place are based on the colleague opinion survey, engagement scores, impact on guests' perceptions, impact on revenue, and turnover and not necessarily in training. Consequently, the findings highlight two needs. Firstly, the need for effective measurements to be put in place supporting the work of Fitz-Enz, (2010) who recommended that organisations should develop a strategic HR measurement system also known as HR Scorecard, which demonstrates HR's impact on business performance and validates human capital investments. And secondly, the need to look into other means to calculate ROI. Resources and tools to compute ROI could be conducting a cost/benefit analysis as suggested by Chambel and Sobral (2011), applying the Kilpatrick's and Phillip's TKM model (Kirkpatrick, 1975; Phillips, 1994), asking assistance by the government to help with the ROI computations (Bartel, 2000) or just using the ROI formula suggested by Van Buren and Erskine (2002) taking into account the benefits and costs of each training programme.

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**Model 2: Training model based on qualitative findings.**



The above model confirms that the company has a strong belief in HCI and it forms part of their strategic agenda since there is a strong value placed on learning and development of front-line employees. However, in order for the Learning and Development department to be effective and efficient there is a need to be further supported by the organisation as well as hotel line-management. Only then can the role of the L&D department fully influence the training environment and the training provision. Nonetheless, it has to be noted that training challenges also influence negatively the adequacy of the training environment as well as the

provision of training. Consequently, these weak areas have been already addressed and resolved and on some occasions, future action plans are lined up according to L&D managers. Consequently, the results of training and overall human capital investment reflect not only on employee benefits but on organisational benefits too positively and in numerous ways.

### **6.3. DISCUSSION OF QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS.**

The quantitative results of this study aimed to answer objective four of this study.

- To assess employees' views regarding the current investment in human capital and to identify areas for improvement.

#### *Demographics*

The demographic profile of respondents comprised of: gender, age, country of origin, hotel employer, job position, tenure, salary, qualification, native language, and level of proficiency in English.

The results of this study reveal that majority of front-line employees are males representing 74.1% compared to 25.9% who are females. This finding is line with the work of Randeree (2012) who argued that one of the common characteristics of the GCC countries is an inadequate gender balance in the workforce. Furthermore, it highlights that the hospitality industry is male dominant in this part of the world.

In regards to age, the majority of respondents, 40.9%, were between 25-29 years old representing Generation Y-Millennials supporting the work of Magd (2003), and Solent and Hood (2008), who argued that Generation Y is new entrants to the hospitality and tourism workforce. In addition, the results of this study show that 24% of front-line employees were between 30-34 years old representing generation X. More precisely after merging the age bands the results demonstrate that 65.0% were males and 64.2% were females between the ages of 25-34 years old. This study shows that the average age band was between 25-34 years old represented by 64.8% of all respondents in line with the work of Slatten and Mehmetoglu (2011) who showed that the average age of front-line employees was 30 years old amongst a sample of 279 employees in hospitality organisations. Likewise, the work of Ayupp and Chung (2010), who supported similar findings in regards to the age of front-line employees

with 53.6% of respondents being between the ranges of 21-30 years old. This study shows that the industry attracts younger employees supporting the work of Hjalager and Andersen (2001) who argued that the industry suits younger generations for operational, non-supervisory jobs.

In terms of country of origin of the respondents, the results of this study reveal the high diversity amongst front-line employees represented by 55% from South Asia Subcontinent, followed by 31.1% from South East Asian countries, 6.5% from non-Arabic African countries and only 0.3% of UAE Nationals. This study supports the work of Peacock and Ladkin (2002) who argued that use of expatriate labour is a characteristic of the industry. In addition, this study supports the findings of the BMI (Q4 2012) report stating that a major concern of the UAE is the heavy dependence on labour migrants and ex-pats with an average of 98% of private-sector employees represented by non-Emiratis. In addition, this finding supports the work of Wilkins (2001), and Forstenlechner and Mellahi (2010), who argued that foreign workers carry out lower level jobs including manual and technical jobs in sectors such as construction and service. As well as Riley *et al.*'s. (2002) study who argued that the industry has a notion of servitude and inferiority. In line with this study, another recent survey by the Labour Force (2011) in Dubai found similar results revealing that the hospitality industry employed 57,747 people with only 172 being UAE Nationals. The findings of this study demonstrate that there is a high tendency to rely on foreign workers because they are willing to work in the private sector whereas UAE Nationals prefer to work in the public sector. Hence, supporting the work of Washington *et al.* (2003) who concluded that occupations play a crucial and psychological role in the formation of 'self-image', 'self-esteem', and 'self-worth' which are key contributing factors in the selection of professions and career decisions. The results of this study also demonstrate that the hotel industry is mainly represented by an expatriate workforce due to the reluctance of U.A.E. Nationals to join the industry. Several authors supported the fact that there is a lack of U.A.E. Nationals joining the private sector such as Forstenlechner and Mellahi (2010), Naama, Haven-Tang, & Jones (2008), Neal (2010), and Stephenson *et al.* (2010), who argued that this resistance is based on several key factors. These factors, which add to the resistance of U.A.E. Nationals entering the hospitality and tourism industry, refer to the low social image of the industry, high stress levels, low compensation in comparison with salaries offered in the government sector, lack of job security, long working hours, and limited opportunities for career growth. Moreover, westerners influence current managerial practices having a different leadership

style than Arabs. Another crucial point as argued by Baud and Mahboug (2001) is that despite the fact that more Emirati women are entering the labour force, the Emirati culture and other influential factors such as traditions, religion, social, and cultural norms in the country restrict them from entering the hospitality industry.

As expected based on the origin findings of front-line employees, Hindi is the most popular native language spoken by 87% of respondents, followed by Filipino accounting for 78% of respondents, Nepali accounting for 7.9% of respondents followed closely by English accounting for 7.6% of respondents. The official language of the U.A.E. is Arabic, however, the results of this study reveal that Arabic as a native language is represented by only .5% of respondents. According to the CIA-The World Fact Book, the languages that are widely used and spoken in the U.A.E. except Arabic include Persian, English, Hindi and Urdu. As a result, since English is the international commercial language, and for the majority of respondents English is a second language, the hotels provide English classes to ensure that front-line employees can communicate with internal and external customers. This is in line with the work of Costen *et al.* (2010), who discussed that cultural diversity could create a challenge in delivering the desired level of customer service. As an example in the case of Chinn's restaurants in the USA, around half of the restaurant's employees were immigrants from Mexico and Central America, which created a major language barrier between customers, employees, and supervisors. It is proved that in-house English classes as a Second Language programme were founded by a third party instilling a lot of pride in employees by raising their morale, teamwork, and communication skills (Costen *et al.*, 2010).

In regards to English proficiency of respondents, the results reveal that over two thirds of respondents are between levels 4 (advanced) and 5 (proficient) in English listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. However, 25.1% of respondents are in level 3 in speaking and 24.5% of respondents are in level 3 in writing skills. According to the senior management who was interviewed, it was mentioned that front-line employees should be at level 4 and above which coincide with the findings from the survey but in reality management perceptions and the researcher's observations are different to the findings above, hence there is a contradictory finding. Management perceived lack of English as a language barrier and as a main challenge and the researcher also identified that lack of English amongst participants was an obstacle influencing their level of participation and understanding of the content of the training programmes.



In reference to the education of front-line employees, the results reveal that 38.1% of respondents hold a Bachelor's degree. After merging the educational bands, the results of this study show that only 1.9% of front-line employees had no qualifications, 37.59% of front-line employees had secondary and college education and 60.48% of front-line employees had higher education. The results of this study indicate that front-line hospitality employees are educated in contrast to the findings of Baum (1993), Hai-yan and Baum (2006), Lucas (1995), and Vujic, *et al.* (2008) who argued that education in the hospitality and tourism industry is significantly low. Furthermore, it contradicts the notion that hospitality employees are uneducated. Moreover, considering that 55% of the respondents originate from Sub Continent countries there is a strong relationship between their origin and education supporting the work of Jauhari (2006) who argued that India offers a wide range of educational qualifications and thousands of people aim to pursue a career in hospitality. Nevertheless, it needs to be addressed that the findings of this study do not identify if the qualifications of front-line employees are hospitality related consequently indicating a minor weakness in the survey.

With reference to education and gender, the results of this study show that over two thirds of male front-line employees have completed their secondary-college and higher education in contrast to the work of Thrane (2008) who argued that very small differences exist between gender and educational attainment. Nevertheless, this finding could be different since 74.1% of respondents were male employees representing a possible sample issue of respondents but at the same time could be seen as a reflection of the gender imbalance in Dubai's workforce composition.

In relation to the job positions, the study reveals that there is a high representation of F&B front line employees working as waiters followed by butlers. This large numbers are due to the big number of F&B outlets in each hotel, and the number of hotel rooms and suites each five star hotel has. In addition, due to the personalised and luxurious service that these hotels offer to guests supporting the work of Magnini and Honeycutt (2005), who argued that luxury hotel customers desire to feel sophisticated and important and in line with Taner (2001) who supported that face-to-face interaction between front-line employees and customers are crucial and reflect on the quality service. Moreover, the provision of luxury services offered by five star hotels in Dubai are reflected in the high-end services and products offered by various hotel departments such as the transportation department consisting of job positions ranging from executive car drivers, to Rolls Royce drivers, to buggy drivers, to 'abra' drivers.

With regard to the job positions and gender, the results show that all sub-departments are male dominant with the exception of reception and guest relations. This is in line with the management findings of this study who stated that the workforce is male dominant in the hotels and one of the main recruitment drives is to attract more female front-line employees than male front-line employees. In addition, all of the respondents are on a full-time contract with the only exception being the banqueting department utilizing casual staff. Consequently, this study shows that gender imbalance is an issue in Dubai as well as in hospitality employment. Moreover, in Dubai staff are employed primarily on a full-time basis due to the rules of the land in regards to visa sponsorships. This is in contrast to the hospitality sector in Western countries where more women are employed on a part-time basis as argued by Riley *et al.* (2002) and seen in operational hotel departments as supported by Davies *et al.* (2001). Furthermore, the hospitality industry offers numerous employment contracts such as seasonal, part-time, and casual staff which are not applicable in the hospitality sector in this part of the world due to visa regulations restricting employee labour mobility, flexible working hours, and ways of reducing hotels' additional payroll expenses.

In regards to the service tenure, the results of this study indicate that the majority of respondents, 28.3%, have been employed for less than a year. Besides, 25.6% of respondents have been employed for five years or more in their current job position representing a more positive picture in terms of front-line employees' service tenure and loyalty. This is in contrast with the work of Patah, Radzi, Abdullah, Adzmy, Zain, & Derani (2009) in five star hotels in Malaysia who concluded that where only 9.8% of respondents who had a service tenure of five years in the front-office department. In addition, the study shows that 49.8% of respondents have been in the company less than one year to two years, and 50.1% of respondents have been in the company from three years to five years and over, highlighting that long-term service front-line employees can be considered as 'veterans' according to Lee and Allen (1982), and Morrison (2002). However, this finding can also reflect negatively on opportunities for internal promotions supporting L&D managers' views who argued that internal promotions in the company are very slow and many false promises are given to lower level employees in regards to career progression.

In reference to service tenure and gender comparison, the results show that there is a slight increase on female front-line employees (n=34) who have service tenure with less than a

year. This finding is positive and supports the hotels' recruitment drive in trying to increase female front-line employees in various departments.

As far as the salary of front-line employees is concerned, the results of this study show that, even if five star hotel properties in Dubai charge high room rates and have extremely high F&B revenues. For instance, alcoholic beverages alone are taxed at 30% and a bottle of still water can cost as much as £6. Moreover, based on the statistics by the DTCM (2011), hotel revenues in Dubai reached AED 13,666,731,000 equivalent to £2,484,860,181 billion. Nevertheless, front-line employees salaries remain extremely low with an average salary ranging between £182 to £272 per month supporting the notion of low wages being paid in the hospitality sector to lower level employees in comparison to other industries supported by Cannon and Gustafson (2002), Coyle-Shapiro (2002), Hai-yan and Baum (2006), Lashley (2009), Lucas (2004), and Riley and Szivas (2003). Eventually, this study supports Clarey (2012) who reported that the majority of front-line employees in the hospitality industry in the U.A.E. are poorly paid.

Furthermore, this study shows that even though front-line employees have higher education wages are still low, supporting the work of Nerdrum and Erikson (2001) who argued that determination of wages is not dependent on the level of education and learning, which are considered as human capital investments in people. Nonetheless, salaries in this study exclude additional benefits. Benefits provided by the company and make up the compensation packages of employees comprise of accommodation, on and off duty-meals, uniforms, transportation to and from work, dry cleaning (only for uniforms), medical, and an air ticket to the home country of employees once every two years. This is consistent with the work of Shaw and Williams (1994) who argued that all these benefits provide a valuable trade-off for low wages. Evidently, this study also shows that salaries and benefits available to employees differ according to their grade and their seniority in the organisation, supporting the work of Davies *et al.* (2001). Staff accommodation is very crucial for the well-being of employees, attraction, retention, and quality of life-style and the results of this study reveal that the company takes employee housing very seriously. Furthermore, it was confirmed by a recent award won for best employee housing amongst other companies within Dubai. Consequently, supporting the work of Kusluvan *et al.* (2010) who suggested that hospitality organisations offering staff accommodation and food as part of employees' remuneration package should ensure that physical facilities and service are in good condition. Otherwise, employees will not feel valued by their employers and consequently will lead to employees'

de-motivation, decreased job satisfaction, and lower intentions of staying with their current employer.

It has to be emphasized that because of these low wages, U.A.E. Nationals are not attracted to the hospitality industry even more supporting the work of Bremmer (2004) and reflecting on the big gap of wage differentials between Emiratis and non-Emiratis. For instance, as per the Labour Force Survey (2011) an Emirati average monthly income corresponds to AED 26,000 (£4,727) whereas for a non-Emirati the average monthly income is AED 5,500 (£1,000). This study reveals that the starting salary of an Emirati in the company is a minimum of AED 5000 (£909), which is four times more than what a foreign employee earns. In line with the Middle East Salary Survey (2012), the majority of respondents agreed that wages for hospitality staff were minimal, and just under half-stated that salaries should be raised. Nonetheless, 35% of respondents believed that salaries should remain the same because hospitality companies offer a great amount of training to front-line employees and career development opportunities. Moreover, the Middle East Salary Survey (2012) revealed that the hotel and restaurant sector had the lowest monthly compensation package and that a non managerial employee average salary is AED 1250 (£227) in line with the results of this study. These high wages differentials between Emiratis and expats force companies to be reluctant on recruiting Emiratis since payroll expenses increase dramatically, leading into hotel recruitment efforts being concentrated in countries with lower incomes such as India, Nepal, and Philippines amongst others.

In regards to gender and salary the results do not indicate any differences in earnings, opposing the work of Washington *et al.* (2003) who argued that there is earnings imbalance between the two genders. Additionally, Li (2001) highlighted that earning imbalances are due to several influential factors such as family responsibilities and maternity leave or even according to Thrane's (2008) findings supporting that gender-earning imbalance is due to the fact that women possess less human capital than men.

#### *Organisational support towards training*

The results of this study show that overall the organisation is good at providing all types of training demonstrating that the organisation invests in HC through training and has strong commitment to assist front-line employees to learn and develop new skills that further permit employees' development and progression in accordance with the work of Bulut and Culha (2010), Coyle-Saphiro (2002), Crick and Spencer (2010), and Lee and Bruvold (2003).

Particularly, the results of the study reveal that 43.6% of respondents strongly agreed that the organisation provides good induction training supporting the work of Kusluvan *et al.* (2010) and Schmidt and Akdere (2007) who argued that induction training is an important element for newcomers sharing information in regards the organisational culture; vision; values; mission; structure; ethics; policies and confidentiality. In addition, the high satisfaction of participants in regards to the induction training also reflects positively on the review and update of the 'Welcome Programme'.

Furthermore, 36.8% of respondents strongly agreed that the organisation provides good cross training supporting the work of Chambel and Sobral (2011), Finegold *et al.*, (2005), and Forrier and Sels (2003), who argued that development of transferrable skills through training is an advantage that organisations offer to employees since it enhances their employability in the internal and external labour market.

After that, 33% of respondents strongly agreed that the organisation provides them with good technical/professional skills, and 32.7% of respondents strongly agreed that the organisation provides them with good on-the-job training. This result also supports managers' views that most learning is achieved through on-the-job training followed by classroom training delivered in-house. On-the-job training is more job-related, as argued by Schononwille (2001), and the results reveal that the organisation actually provides good job related training both informal and formal on-the-job training, through technical/professional skills training and through on-the-job training, supporting the work of Jameson (2000) and Riley *et al.* (2002) who argued that hospitality organisations mostly rely on on-the-job training.

Nevertheless, 31.6% of respondents strongly disagreed that the organisation provides good off-the-job training, but still is a satisfactory score supporting the work of Abeysekera (2006). Furthermore, this result supports Smith's and Kemmis's (2010) study who argued that off-the-job training delivery is perceived less suitable for industries where customer contacts, drives skills development. Additionally, the L&D department is in charge of all training interventions and hence limiting the use of off-the-job training.

#### *Management support towards training*

The results of this study show that front-line employees overall are satisfied with the management support towards training. The results of this study indicate that 28.9% of front-line employees were very satisfied and 44.4% were satisfied with the communication of available training courses by their supervisors, ranking this variable first out of the six

variables and providing a statistically positive result of communication of training courses by line supervisors and line managers to front-line employees. This finding also supports that the L&D department disseminates and communicates the annual training calendar to line managers who then communicate it effectively to front-line employees supporting the work of Chiang *et al.* (2005).

Similarly, the results of this study show that 28.1% of front-line employees were very satisfied and 42.2% were satisfied with the encouragement and support to participate in training and development opportunities given by their supervisors. Hence, supporting the work of Bartlett and Kang (2004), Boon and Arumugam (2006), Bulut and Culha (2010), Chiaburu and Tekleab (2005), and Watson (2008), who argued that managers should understand the benefits of training towards employees' development and consequently managers who provide support for employees ensure full access, full participation, and completion of training programs by their employees. Furthermore, according to Santos and Stuart's (2003) findings, 42% of employees claimed that managers encourage them and support them to take part in training and development opportunities to a great extent, 29% to a moderate extent, and 29% to a limited extent. Similarly, the results of this study show that supervisors and line managers are in favour of human capital investment and are empathetic towards learning opportunities for their team members. Nevertheless, this is another contradictory finding since L&D managers' perceptions highlighted that on some occasions front-line employees are sent on training programmes just for managers to meet their KPIs rather than to support front-line employees' development opportunities. In addition, management perceptions reveal that departmental influence is required towards the encouragement and culture of learning driven by line managers due to their role as leaders, supporting the work of Bulut and Culha (2010).

Interestingly enough, the results of this study reveal that 25.3% of front-line employees were very satisfied, and 41.7% were satisfied with the review of their progress and feedback provided by their supervisors, supporting the TKM model- Level 3 which relates to Application/Implementation and is conducted through performance review. Moreover, this study supports the work of Frash *et al.* (2010) who argued that supervisors must allocate time during work-shifts to ensure that training content is been reviewed and training objectives are reinforced. Furthermore, in line with the findings of Santos and Stuart (2003), 38% of employees claimed that their managers review their progress to a great extent, 28% to a

moderate extent, and 34% to a limited extent. The results of this study show that only a minority of respondents, 8.7%, felt dissatisfied and 3.5% felt very dissatisfied with the review of their progress and feedback provided by their supervisors. However, this is another contradictory finding in comparison to L&D managers, since they believed that a major weakness is post-training due to the lack of review and follow up by line managers.

In regards to effective coaching and guiding by supervisors, the results of this study show that 24% of front-line employees were very satisfied and 43.1% of respondents were satisfied. These results prove statistically a positive result and support that there is a coaching culture within the hotels supporting the work of Belt *et al.* (2002), and Lim and Johnson (2002), who argued that coaching is essential in providing support to employees effectively to carry out their duties and responsibilities. Moreover, this study is in line with the annual CIPD report (2011) that showed coaching by line managers as the second most effective learning and talent development practice. Moreover, Santos and Stuart's (2003) findings showed that 25% of respondents received coaching and guiding by their managers to a great extent, 33% to a moderate extent, and 42% to a limited extent. Nonetheless, this is another contradictory finding in contrast to the L&D managers' perceptions, who believed that coaching is an area of improvement within the company. In spite of this, it can also be interpreted as a positive reflection on the action plan taken by the L&D managers by trying to increase the departmental involvement, by implementing a coaching training session for line managers, and by providing an on-line training programme to line managers called 'Coaching: Getting Ready to Coach'.

Regarding the discussion of personal training and development needs between supervisors and front-line employees, 24% of respondents were very satisfied and 38.1% were satisfied. These results also support the L&D management views that individual training and development needs are scrutinised and identified during the LNA process, showing that the involvement of line managers in identifying the needs of their employees is a vital component of the LNA process, supporting the work of Brown (2002), Cedaka (2010), Noe *et al.* (2012), and Sorenson (2002). Similarly, Santos and Stuart's (2003) findings showed that 23% of employees hold to great extent regular discussions with management in regards their training and development needs, 36% to a moderate extent, and 41% to a limited extent.

Even though, the results reveal that 60.5% of front-line employees expressed high levels of satisfaction with their supervisors setting tasks and development goals together, 26.7% of respondents were neutral, 8.7% were dissatisfied, and 4.1% were very dissatisfied. Similarly, the findings from Santos and Stuart (2003) showed that 35% of employees jointly set tasks and development goals with their managers to a great extent, 28% to a moderate extent, and 37% to a limited extent. Consequently, this result implies that supervisors and line managers should set up tasks and goals together with front-line employees and it is an area of improvement even though it is still a very satisfactory score. L&D managers mainly referred to the fact that training assists organisational goals, and individual goals were only partially addressed using IDPs. Nevertheless, a similar finding was revealed by L&D managers, who agreed that this is a weak area and suggested that line managers need further training on how to successfully complete the IDPs of their teams. In addition, not only managers but front-line employees are also trained to increase the effective use of IDPs as observed by the researcher in the 'Praise me reload' training programme demonstrating effective training interventions by the L&D department in regards the use of IDPs.

#### *Adequacy of training environment*

Overall, the results of this study reveal that front-line employees are satisfied with the adequacy of the training facilities and provision of training. The results of this study reveal that 40.3% of respondents were very satisfied, and 49% were satisfied with the adequacy of the physical conditions in the room. This supports the work of Reid and Barrington (1999), Biech (2005), and Siddons (2003), who discussed that the training facilities play a crucial role. Moreover, these results contradict management views believing that the training environment is under-resourced in terms of facilities and hence opposing the work of Baum (2002), Lashley (2009), and Des Monk and Ryding (2007), who argued that many hotel organisations lack training resources and formal training tactics.

The results of this study indicate that 36.8% of respondents were very satisfied and 52.3% were satisfied with the location of the training facilities, supporting the work of Chiang *et al.* (2005) who argued that location forms part of the training plan and is crucial for establishing an environment, which contributes towards the trainees' learning.

In regards to the training material, 33.2% of respondents were very satisfied, and 55% were satisfied. Nevertheless, even though employees' perceptions regarding the training material is positive it contradicts L&D management perceptions regarding the training material that was



described as 'out-of-date', and it is also supported by the observation of the 'Telephone skills' training programme. Although, action has been taken by the company by appointing a person to review and update all the training material content and programmes.

Concerning the quality of the training courses front-line employees attended, the results of this study showed that 31.9% of respondents were very satisfied and 55.9% were satisfied. The results of this study support the work of Chiang *et al.* (2005) who argued that employees' perceptions of training quality depend on different factors. These factors refer to hotels providing training at the time it is being scheduled, management supporting training, clear communication between trainers and employees regarding training procedures, hotels providing sufficient training for employees to perform their jobs and hotels making use of updated tools and resources. This result also supports management views that tools used to enhance training quality consist of the LNA, feedback obtained from third parties such as trainers, HODs, and front-line employees, and through the effective use of the annual training reports.

Relevant to the trainers' knowledge and expertise, the results show that 30.5% of respondents were very satisfied and 56.1% were satisfied, supporting the work of Davenport (2007), Kalargyrou and Woods (2009), Lalaguna (2007), and Leigh (2006). Similarly, this finding supports management perceptions who also agreed that part of their responsibility, as a department is to oversee the trainers' development by enhancing their skills and professionalism incorporating initiatives such as organized learning events as well as offering funding to trainers for formal qualifications offered by the CIPD amongst other developmental initiatives.

In regards to the food and beverage service, the majority of respondents of this study were satisfied; however, 21.8% of respondents were neutral, 4.9% of respondents were dissatisfied, and 1.9% of respondents were very dissatisfied. This reflects on the fact that other than tea and coffee no other F&B services are offered in the training rooms, since front-line employees have their lunch and optional tea-coffee breaks served in the assigned staff canteens.

The results of this study show that front-line employees gained benefits in different areas because of training provided by the company. These results support management perceptions that the company provides different types of training in order to enhance and develop hard, soft, and aesthetic skills.

### *Benefits of training*

The results of this study reveal that 55% of front-line employees strongly agreed, and 40.1% agreed that as a result of training they are more capable of providing high customer service to guests. This finding is in line with the work of Davidson *et al.*, (2011), Garlick (2010), Lin and Mattila (2010), McColl-Kennedy and White (1997), Rowden and Conine (2005), Somerville (2007), and Valera and García (2006), who argued that companies should provide customer service training to front-line employees to enhance employees' capabilities resulting in positive interactions between front-line employees and customers. In addition, this result supports management perceptions in regards the provision of customer service training programme 'Creating Memorable Experiences' reflecting positive in employees' learning outcomes and enhancement of front-line employees' customer service skills. In addition, this type of training enhances employees' attitudes on how to smile and behave but it lacks the prediction of customer needs and wants supporting the work of McColl-Kennedy and White (1997).

The results of this study indicate that 49.3% of front-line employees strongly agreed and 42.2% agreed that because of training they feel more confident at work. These results are in line with the work of Mullen (2004), Santos and Stuart (2003), Seymour (2000), and Somerville (2007), and the case study illustrated by Skillnets Networked Learning (2005) who supported that training interventions increase intangible benefits such as confidence levels of employees and self-efficacy. Furthermore, this result is in line with management perceptions who believe that a result of training reflects in an increase on employees' confidence level in selling. Moreover, this result could also support the positive training outcomes of the 'LQA standards' training programme observed by the researcher.

The results of this study indicate that 44.7% of front-line employees strongly agreed and 48.2% agreed that because of training they are constantly improving and doing things better. Hence, this result indicates that training impacts job involvement and consequently performance, in line with the work of Daniels (2008), Hemdi and Nasurdin (2006) and Somerville (2007) who discussed that one of the training outcomes can be seen in regards to increased employee performance. Moreover, Santo's and Stuart's (2003) findings showed that 90% of respondents agreed that training helps them to do their job better, 7% were neutral, and 3% disagreed. Furthermore, the majority of front-line employees can be characterized as conscientious since their positive behaviour transforms into high-quality performance as argued by Dudley *et al.* (2006). In addition, the various types of training

interventions that the company offers to front-line employees results in increased performance supporting the work of Banfield and Kay (2008), and Rodríguez and Gregory (2005). This finding also reflects that one of the Es of training stands for enhancement according to Banfield and Kay (2008) and it addresses the improvement of skills and competencies of individual within an organisation. Similarly, management perceptions support that training interventions aim to improve employee performance, but due to weak performance reviews, L&D managers do not seem convinced that transfer of training is effective within the company.

Relating to front-line employees' increased productivity because of training, 42.8% of respondents strongly agreed, and 50.1% agreed. This result is positive and supports the work of Heskett *et al.* (1994), Kusluvan *et al.* (2010), Tews and Tracey (2009), and Watson (2008) who discussed that training should reflect positive on increased employees' productivity. Furthermore, this result is in line with Forrier and Sels (2003) who discussed that the return-on-investment in training from an employer's perspective can be seen in terms of higher employees' productivity. Likewise, Blake *et al.*'s. (2006) study found that 92% of respondents agreed that training and development of skills are important in improving productivity. Similarly, this finding supports management perceptions that training interventions increase employees' productivity but unfortunately, no specific metrics are in place to measure increased productivity supporting the work of Stern (2011) and in accordance with Blake *et al.*'s. (2006) recommendations, organisations could measure productivity by assessing the output per employee; the output per hour of labour; and the total factor productivity, which measures output per unit of inputs.

The results of this study indicate that front-line employees feel more competent to perform their duties according to the existing hotel standards with 37.3% of respondents strongly agreeing and 55.9% agreeing. This result is in line with the work of Hinkin and Tracey (2000), who concluded that organisations providing L&D opportunities to their workforce reflect on the service quality offered to customers by competent employees and as argued by Guest (2002), provision of training and skill development assists employees in operating autonomously and responsibly due to increased competencies acquisition. Similarly, this finding supports L&D management perceptions who stated that one of the benefits of training for front-line employees is the increase of employees' skills and competencies.

In regards to the statement ‘as a result of training, I am able to be more innovative, more creative and suggestive of new ideas’, 37.6% of front-line employees strongly agreed and 50.1% agreed. This result supports that human capital assists in employees producing intellectual capital through competences, attitudes, and intellectual agility as argued by Bontis *et al.* (2002). Consistent with the work of Butcher *et al.* (2009), Washington *et al.* (2003), Huang *et al.* (2007), and Wong and Pang (2003), this result finds that due to the company’s provision of training, front-line employees perform their work in a more innovative style. As argued by Bontis, *et al.* (2002), it increases employees’ capabilities of changing practices and becoming innovative in areas such as problem-solving and in line with the findings of Yeung, (2006), and Martínez-Ros and Orfila-Sintes, (2012), who argued that an increase in innovation is dependent on training plans, training frequency, and intensity.

With reference to the statement ‘as a result of training I am ready for a promotion’, 47.4% of front-line employees strongly agreed, and 34.1% agreed. This result indicates that employee perceptions of participating and attending training prepares them for a promotion in line with the work of Nadeem (2010), Wang *et al.* (2011), and Washington *et al.* (2003). Furthermore, according to Santos and Stuart (2003) findings 42% of respondents agreed, 32% were neutral and 26% disagreed that training improves their promotion prospects. The result of this study also reflects positive on the training programmes offered by the company to front-line employees such as ‘Developing your career’ and the E-learning course ‘Managing Your Career’ directing front-line employees to take accountability of their own career progression. This finding also supports management perceptions who have argued that one of the main benefits of training is career growth and employee progression. However, this result indicates that even though front-line employees are ready for a promotion due to human capital interventions, the company is lacking in internal talent promotions as highlighted by the L&D managers.

Relating to front-line employees commitment to the organisation as a result of training, 38.1% of respondents strongly agreed and 48.2% agreed with the statement. This is a positive finding supporting that the impact of training generates employee organisational commitment, in line with the work of Chambel and Sobral (2011), Chiang and Jang (2008), Cohen (2007), Mitlacher (2008), Nadeem (2010), Owens (2006), and Pool and Pool (2007) who argued that training may increase employees’ commitment to the organisation. In

addition, this result supports the case study by Skillnets Networked Learning (2005) that stated that one of the intangible benefits because of training is increased employees commitment to the company. Hence, this finding opposes the work of Kusluvan *et al.* (2010) who argued that due to underdeveloped HR practices in the hospitality industry, employee commitment is not generated.

In regards to the statement ‘as a result of training I am more enthusiastic and happy in the workplace’, 41.1% of respondents strongly agreed and 40.1% agreed. This result reveals that training has a high positive effect on front-line employees’ emotions and employee engagement supporting the work of Aggarwal and Bhargava (2011), Bakker *et al.* (2012), Garlick (2010), Morton (2005), Pollitt (2011), and Robbins and Judge (2009). Similarly, this finding supports L&D management perceptions that one of the benefits associated because of human capital investment through training reflects on employees’ engagement and employees positive emotions such as happiness.

Relating to front-line employees increased motivation at work as a result of training, 36% of respondents strongly agreed and 41.1% agreed. This indicates that effective training increases employees’ motivation at work supporting the study of Sirota *et al.* (2005) who based their findings on the three-factor theory of human motivation at work. Likewise, past studies supported that there is a relationship between employees motivation and effective training within learning oriented organisations (Basset-Jones and Lloyd, 2005; Nadeem, 2010; Pool and Pool, 2007; and Sahinidis and Bouris, 2008). Furthermore, Santo’s and Stuart’s (2003) findings showed that 78% of respondents agreed that after training they feel more motivated at work, 17% were neutral and 5% disagreed. Similarly, the result of this study supports L&D management perceptions who stated that training has a positive impact on employees’ values, attitude and motivation. Nevertheless, this result opposes the work of Kusluvan *et al.* (2010) who concluded that due to unprofessional HR practices in the industry, employee motivation is not generated.

With reference to the statement ‘As a result of training I feel valued by the company’ 36% of front-line employees strongly agreed and 40.3% agreed with the statement. This result reveals that training influences perceived organisational support since employees believe that the organisation values their contribution and looks after their well-being in line with the studies of Allen *et al.*, (2003), Nadeem (2010), and Takeuchi *et al.* (2007). Moreover, Santos and Stuart (2003) findings showed that 37% of respondents agreed that after training they feel

valued by the company, 40% were neutral and 23% disagreed. According to Magd (2003) feeling valued is a characteristic of generation Y, representing the majority of front-line employees of this study. In addition, this result reveals that employees receive themselves as part of the social exchange relationship rather than commercial relationship in line with the study of Shore and Shore (1995). Moreover, this result supports Daniels (2008) findings concluding that despite the economic situation organisations face, training should be provided in order for employees to feel valued and important assets of the organisation. Similarly, this result supports L&D managers' views, who strongly agreed that the company values all employees and it is reflected on the company's training philosophy.

In regards to the statement 'As a result of training I feel satisfied with my job' 35.4% of front-line employees strongly agreed and 40.1% agreed. This result indicates that training increases employees' job satisfaction supporting the studies of Au *et al.* (2008), Basset-Jones and Lloyd (2005), Bartlett (2001), Buckley and Caple (2008), Cannon and Gustafson (2002), Chiang *et al.* (2005), Kusluvan *et al.* (2010), Owens (2006), Rowden and Conine (2005), and Sahinidis and Bouris (2008). Furthermore, the study by Santos and Stuart (2003) showed that 79% of respondents agreed that training leads to higher job satisfaction, 14% were neutral and 7% disagreed. In addition, according to the case study illustrated by Skillnets Networked Learning (2005), one of the three intangible benefits of training is increased job satisfaction. Similarly, this result supports L&D management perceptions that training has a positive impact on employees' job satisfaction.

With reference to the statement 'As a result of training I am entitled for a reward /incentive', two thirds of respondents agreed. However, most of the literature links rewards and incentives to performance and not directly to effective outcomes of training (Santos & Stuart, 2003). According to Sturman's (2001) study increases in human capital were linked to rises in average pay jobs, but in the hospitality industry, disproportional payments were evident even with human capital rises, in contrast to other industries. Santo's and Stuart's (2003) findings showed that 20% of respondents agreed that training leads to higher pay, 32% were neutral and 48% disagreed.

#### *Purpose of training programmes.*

In regards to the purpose of the training programmes front-line employees have attended, the results of this study show that the majority of front-line employees, 65.9%, attended customer service skills and attitudinal training programmes, 61.6% attended product knowledge and

product awareness training, 57.5% attended task specific skills training, 52% career awareness training, 46.9% team working skills accounting, 35.1% interpersonal skills training, 28.9% foreign languages acquisition, and 28.6% attended diversity training programmes. The company offers different training programmes in order to develop front-line employees 'hard', 'soft' and 'aesthetic' skills which are required. These results are in line with the work of Baum (2006), who argued that it is quite difficult and biased to identify which skills are advantageous for front-line service jobs and according to Kelliher and Riley (2002), front-line related jobs require a combination of multiple skills. Similarly, these results reflect positive on L&D management perceptions who argued that the identification and content of training programmes are based on the LNA and the feedback received from line-managers and customers. Through the feedback, they develop the required skill areas by providing induction training, job-specific operational training, mandatory training, improvement training, and attitudinal training supporting the work of Pollock and Ritchie (1990). Furthermore, these results also reflect the different training programmes observed by the researcher.

#### *Training techniques used by trainers*

The training techniques most frequently used by facilitators to deliver training to front-line employees were role-plays, followed by group discussions, lectures, and then reading assignments. E-learning was not used as much and only 13.1% of respondents have experienced that technique during a training programme, which is a contradictory finding, since L&D managers argued that E-learning as well as blended learning are frequently used. Nevertheless, L&D managers agreed that E-learning and blended learning are still areas for improvement. Least used techniques by facilitators based on front-line experiences were scripts, tutorials, and use of education systems and technology, which are in line with L&D management perceptions. These findings reveal that the company mainly uses instructor-led classroom based training techniques, which is very basic and traditional for a large size company with over 10,000 employees. In contrast, according to the Training Industry Report (2011), large size companies are using 26.6% blended learning, 29.4% instructor-led classroom only, 13.1% virtual classroom/webcast only, 29.5% online or computer based methods only, 2.1% social networking and 0.7% mobile.

#### *Utilization of IDPs.*

The results of this study show that 76% of front-line employees said that their IDPs do form part of their personal development, which supports L&D management perceptions in regards the use of IDPs within the company in line with Santos and Stuart's (2003) findings supporting that 72% of staff had discussed an IDP and 81% had personal development goals. Moreover, the results of this study reflects positively on the training effectiveness of 'Praise me reload' observed by the researcher.

#### *Training hours received per annum.*

Based on the Training Industry Report (2011) findings, on average employees receive 39 hours of training per annum and more specifically retail/wholesale organisations have the highest average number of training hours corresponding to 93 hours per annum. In this case, interestingly enough, the results reveal that front-line employees receive approximately 120 training hours per annum, which is well above other industries and higher than the annual report in learning and talent development by the CIPD (2011) which reported that the median number of training per annum is five days or 40 hours. Furthermore, it supports the high commitment of delivering training hours to front-line employees but according to L&D managers it is not about the number of training hours but about the quality of these training hours, emphasizing quality over quantity.

#### *External training.*

The results of this study indicate that 63% of front-line employees have not attended any formal training outside the workplace, supporting the work of Davies *et al.* (2001) who argued that external training is mainly offered to supervisors and managers. Based on the 38.6% of front-line employees who have attended formal training outside their workplace, funding was mainly provided by the employer, followed by self-funded and only 1.6% of formal training was financed by the government. This result indicates that state funding is minimal for non-Nationals in Dubai and that formal training for low level employees is mainly offered only to Emiratis through programmes like the 'Maharat' in the hospitality sector which runs for nine weeks, supporting the work of Ezz Al Deen (2009). Consequently, highlighting the lack of governmental programmes related to the hospitality industry and the lack of vocational education in the U.A.E.

Based on the Pearson correlations of this study the results reveal that the strongest correlations were as follow:



‘My supervisor jointly sets tasks and development goals with me’ was strongly correlated and significant with ‘my supervisors reviews my progress and provides me with feedback’  $r=.85$ ,  $p>.001$ , and with ‘my supervisor coaches and guides me effectively’  $r=.80$ ,  $p>.001$ . These results indicate that manager’s identification of tasks and development goals of front-line employees are associated with the management review of front-line employees’ progress through feedback, and effective coaching and guiding practices, supporting the work of Chiang *et al.* (2005) and Santos and Stuart (2003).

‘My supervisor reviews my progress and provides me with feedback’ was strongly correlated and significant with ‘my supervisor coaches and guides me effectively’  $r=.83$ ,  $p>.001$ . This result indicates that line-managers’ ways of reviewing progress and providing feedback to front-line employees is strongly associated with effective coaching and guiding practices in line with the work of Rowden (2005) and Tharenou (2001).

‘My supervisor regularly discusses my personal training and development needs with me’ was strongly correlated and significant with ‘my supervisor jointly sets tasks and development goals with me’  $r=.83$ ,  $p>.001$ ., with ‘my supervisor reviews my progress and provides me with feedback’  $r=.82$   $p>.001$ ., with ‘my supervisor coaches and guides me effectively’  $r=.78$ ,  $p>.001$ . These results reveal that line-managers frequently discuss front-line employees’ training and development needs, starting during the LNA process, as explained by L&D managers. This discussion it is then associated with the alignment of front-line employees’ tasks and development goals setting, and follow up, which could be reflected also in the effective use of IDPs, effective coaching and guiding by line managers within the company. These results also indicate positive management support towards training as perceived by front-line employees in Dubai hotels. Nevertheless, these results contradict the work of Hai-yan and Baum (2006) based in hotels in China and Santos and Stuart (2003) who concluded that despite managers determining employees’ development needs through an IDP and personal development goals, only 51% receive training to assist them achieve their development needs.

‘My supervisor informs me of available training courses’ was strongly correlated and significant with ‘my supervisor encourages and supports me to take part in training and development opportunities’  $r=.85$ ,  $p>.001$ ., with ‘my supervisor regularly discusses my personal training and development needs with me’  $r=.76$ ,  $p>.001$ ., with ‘my supervisor jointly sets tasks and development goals with me’  $r=.75$ ,  $p>.001$ ., with ‘my supervisor reviews my

progress and provides me with feedback'  $r = 0.74, p > .001$ , with 'my supervisor coaches and guides me effectively'  $r = 0.73, p > .001$ . These results indicate that management support through the communication of training courses on offer to front-line employees is associated with the encouragement and support of front-line employees to access and participate in training and development opportunities. Furthermore, to discuss frequently individual training and development needs, assignment of tasks and goal setting, follow up, and coaching and guiding in line with the work of Bartlett and Kang (2004) and Tharenou (2001). Nevertheless, the results of this study according to L&D managers' perceptions identified that management support towards training is a weak area and needs further improvement specially in the areas of feedback, follow up, and coaching and guiding.

'My supervisor encourages and supports me to take part in training and development opportunities' was strongly correlated and significant with 'my supervisor regularly discusses my personal training and development needs with me'  $r = .81, p > .$ , with 'my supervisor jointly sets tasks and development goals with me'  $r = .80, p > .001$ , with 'my supervisor reviews my progress and provides me with feedback'  $r = .79, p > .001$ , with 'my supervisor coaches and guides me effectively'  $r = .76, p > .001$ . These results indicate that management encouragement and support of front-line employees to attend training and development programmes was strongly associated with discussion of front-line employees training and development needs, with the identification and assignment of front-line employees' tasks and development goals, with follow up and feedback, and with coaching and guiding provided by line-managers to front-line employees. These results are in line with the work of Hemdi and Nasurdin (2006). Furthermore, these results contradict L&D management perceptions who argued that line-managers do not always allow employees to attend training programmes due to high business levels or just send front-line employees to training programmes to meet the KPIs rather than to properly match training interventions with employees' skills gaps.

'As a result of training I am more productive at work' was also strongly correlated and significant with 'as a result of training I am more capable of providing high customer service to our guests'  $r = .77, p > .001$ . This result indicates that due to the training efforts in the organisation which are designed in line with service needs, there is a reflection in individual outcome related to increased productivity as well as business performance outcome related to customer service in line with the work of Fitz-Enz and Davidson (2002), and Richman-Hirsch (2001). Because front-line employees are aware of what they are doing and why, due to the

training received by the organisation, the training impact results in increased front-line employees' productivity, and consequently in the provision of high customer service. Consequently, these results support the work of Valera and García (2006), and therefore training is appropriate and effective since it focus on an increase of individual outputs as well as customer service, supporting the work of Garlick (2010), and McColl-Kennedy and White (1997).

'As a result of training I feel more motivated at work' was strongly correlated and significant with 'as a result of training I feel satisfied with my job'  $r=.75$ ,  $p>.001$ . This result reveals that training impacts positively on front-line employees' motivation and in turn increases job satisfaction in line with the work of Nadeem (2010).

'As a result of training I am constantly improving and doing things better' was strongly correlated and significant with 'as a result of training I am more productive at work'  $r=.74$ ,  $p>.001$ , and with 'as a result of training I am more capable of providing high customer service to our guests'  $r=.74$ ,  $p>.001$ . These results reveal that training impacts positively on front-line employees' job performance and job involvement supporting the work of Wright and Geroys' (2001), resulting in increased productivity. Likewise, these results are in line with the work of Heskett *et al.* (1994), Kusluvan *et al.* (2010), and Tews and Tracey (2009), and increased front-line employees' capabilities in the delivery of high customer service supporting the work of Heskett *et al.* (1994), Kusluvan *et al.* (2010), Somerville (2007), and Tsaur and Lin (2004). Moreover, these results could also reflect on Dubois and Rothwell's (2004) study who concluded that increased employee performance, increased employee productivity and increased customer satisfaction are also considered benefits to the organisation driven by human capital investment. Furthermore, job involvement is highly correlated with training transfer as supported by Colquitt *et al.* (2000), Kontoghiorges (2004), and Pidd (2004). These results are also in line with the L&D management perceptions who argued that training interventions are instigated based on specific reasons in order to enhance employee performance, increase productivity, and luxury customer service delivery.

'As a result of training I am more competent to perform my duties at the level of existing requirements' was strongly correlated and significant with 'as a result of training I am constantly improving and doing things better'  $r = 0.73$ ,  $p>.001$ . This result indicates that there is a strong relationship between the enhancements of behavioural and technical or functional competencies as described by Miller, Rankin, and Neathey (2003), and improved

performance in line with the work of Tai (2006) who argued that employees' competencies were dependent on the adequate training provision by the employers. In line with Vujic *et al.* (2008), competencies for employees refer to professional competences, technical skills, on-the-job training, personal development, security and job safety and orientation towards customers and work results. Furthermore, this result reflects on the perceived value linked with training since the acquired new competencies as a result of training enhances employee performance and consequently implies that there is transfer of training in the workplace, in line with the study of Yelon *et al.* (2004).

'As a result of training I am more enthusiastic and happy in the workplace' was strongly correlated and significant with 'as a result of training I feel more motivated at work'  $r=.73$ ,  $p>.001$ . This result reveals that training has a positive impact on front-line employees' engagement and motivation in line with the work of Robbins and Judge (2009).

'As a result of training I feel satisfied with my job' was strongly correlated and significant with 'as a result of training I feel valued by the company'  $r=.73$ ,  $p>.001$ . This result reveals that training has a positive impact on front-line employees' job satisfaction and perceived organisational support supporting the work of Bartlett (2001), and Robbins and Judge (2009).

'As a result of training I feel valued by the company' was strongly correlated and significant with 'as a result of training I feel committed to the organisation'  $r=.71$ ,  $p>.001$ . This result shows that training has a positive impact on perceived organisational support and employees' organisational commitment supporting the work of Bulut and Culha (2010), Chambel and Sobral (2011), and Cohen (2007).

'As a result of training I am able to be more innovative, more creative and suggestive of new ideas' was strongly correlated and significant with 'as a result of training I am more productive at work'  $r=.70$ ,  $p>.001$ . This result demonstrates that there is a positive relationship between front-line employees' intellectual agility and productivity because of training in line with the work of Lopez-Cabrales *et al.* (2006), Porter and Ketels (2003), and Yeung (2006).

'The quality of the training courses you have attended' was strongly correlated and significant with 'the trainers' knowledge and expertise'  $r=.76$ ,  $p>.001$ . This result indicates that there is a strong relationship between the quality of training courses and the trainers' knowledge and skills. Based on the observations, the training courses are evaluated by

participants using 'happy sheets' and supports that Level 1- Reaction of the TKM model takes place within the company supporting the results illustrated in the case study by Skillnets Networked Learning (2005). Nevertheless, this evaluation method it is not enough and, as argued by Santos and Stuart (2003), training evaluation should assist the quality of the training interventions but through the use of 'happy sheets' that is impossible to achieve. Similarly, L&D managers also stated that the quality of training courses is dependent on the trainers' knowledge and therefore there is a need to further equip trainers with formal qualification amongst other learning and development initiatives.

'My organisation provides its employees with good induction training' was strongly correlated and significant with 'my organisation provides its employees with good technical/professional skills training'  $r=.76$ ,  $p>.001$ . This result shows a strong relationship between induction training and provision of technical/professional skills supporting the work of Kusluvan *et al.* (2010), and Lee-Ross and Pryce (2010).

'My organisation provides its employees with good technical/professional skills training' was strongly correlated with 'my organisation provides its employees with good on-the-job training'  $r=.72$ ,  $p>.001$ . This result reveals that there is a strong relationship between the provision of good technical/professional skills and on-the job training supporting the work of Becton and Graetz (2001), Cheng and Picolli (2002), and Schonewille (2001) and opposing the work of Poulston (2008).

This study used the literature to justify the existence of the suggested model with four dimensions and used the exploratory factor analysis using a principal component analysis (PCA) technique to identify the structure. Furthermore, the results show that the factor analysis created clear factor loadings, each set of indicators loaded clearly on one factor with the exception of one, 'Perceived benefits of training', which had 13 indicators. Moreover, this construct was split into two factors named 'perceived benefits related to knowledge, skills and abilities' and 'perceived benefits related to attitudes and behaviours', adding a fifth dimension to the suggested model. Based on the results from the factor analysis five factors emerged. The first factor explains 45.9% of the variance, the second factor explains 11.4% of the variance and has the highest loadings of all management support towards training indicators, the third factor explains 6.2% of the variance, and the fourth factor explains 4.4% of the variance and the fifth factor explain 3.9% of the variance. Hence, the five dimensional model is represented below:

Factor one was named 'Perceived benefits related to knowledge, skills and abilities' because it refers to the training interventions outcomes regarding the development of knowledge, skills and abilities of front-line employees. This factor contains the items of "As a result of training I am more capable of providing high customer service to our guests" (.839); "As a result of training I am more productive at work" (.829); "As a result of training I am constantly improving and doing things better" (.825); "As a result of training I am able to be more innovative, more creative and suggestive of new ideas" (.761); "As a result of training I am ready for a promotion" (.722); "As a result of training I am more competent to perform my duties at the level of existing requirements" (.699); "As a result of training I feel more confident at work" (.632); these are listed in order of their loading factor on this factor. Such items specifically, the provision of high customer service, increased productivity, and improved performance of front-line employees reflect positive on the perceived benefits related to knowledge, skills, and abilities due to the training as positive outcomes. Whilst examining the items in order the way in which they load onto this factor reveals that training impacts front-line capabilities to provide higher customer service most strongly as opposed to increased competencies and increased level of confidence in the workplace.

Factor two was named "Management support towards training" because it refers to the assistance, encouragement and reinforcement of supervisors and line-managers towards training and development opportunities avail to front-line employees. This factor contains the items of "My supervisor regularly discusses my personal training and development needs with me" (.850); "My supervisor jointly sets tasks and development goals with me" (.848); "My supervisor reviews my progress and provides me with feedback" (.844); "My supervisor encourages and supports me to take part in training and development opportunities" (.843); "My supervisor coaches and guides me effectively" (.814); "My supervisor informs me of available training courses" (.773). Whilst examining the items in order of their loading factors onto this factor, all of the items are strong as opposed to communication of available training courses, but still a satisfactory score.

Factor three was named "Adequacy of training facilities and services" because it refers to the training environment and the provision of training to front-line employees. This factor contains the items of "The location of the training facilities" (.771); "The training material (e.g. hand-outs)" (.750); "The quality of the training courses you have attended" (.713); "The trainers' knowledge and expertise" (.709); "The physical working conditions in the room (e.g. AC, lighting, audio-visual equipment)" (.707); "The food and beverage services (e.g.

refreshments, meals, breaks)” (.571). Such items specifically the location of the training facilities as well as the training material, are strong, as opposed to the food and beverage services.

Factor four which was the new dimension was named “Perceived benefits related to attitude and behaviour” because it refers to the training interventions outcomes regarding enhancement of front-line employees’ job attitudes and behaviour. This factor contains the items of “As a result of training I feel satisfied with my job” (.777); “As a result of training I feel more motivated at work” (.743); “As a result of training I feel valued by the company” (.741); “As a result of training I feel committed to the organisation” (.643); “As a result of training I am more enthusiastic and happy in my workplace” (.636); “As a result of training I am entitled for a reward/ incentive” (.520). Such items liked increased job satisfaction, increased motivation; and increased perceived organisational support, are strong, as opposed to entitlement for a reward/incentive.

Factor five was named “Organisational support towards training” because it represents the different training types the company offers to front-line employees. This factor contains the items of “My organisation provides its employees with good on-the-job training (e.g. training given to employees at their work place)” (.769); “My organisation provides its employees with good technical/ professional skills training” (.710); “My organisation provides its employees with good induction training” (.708); “My organisation provides its employees with good cross training (e.g. training given to employees in different job roles or different departments)” (.672); “My organisation provides its employees with good off –the-job training (e.g. training given to employees away from their work place such as at a college or school)” (.618). Items such as provision of good on-the-job training, good technical/professional skills training, and good induction training are strong as opposed to good off-the-job training.

Moreover, bivariate correlations were conducted amongst the factors emerged from the factor analysis to answer the research questions.

- Research Question 2: Is there an association between organisational support towards training and management support towards training?

The results of this study show that organisational support towards training was strongly correlated and significant with management support towards training  $r=.63$ ,  $p<.001$ . It

suggests that there is support towards training from the organisation since they care and value employees. Moreover, it is demonstrated it through the provision of development activities and training interventions ranging from induction, on-the-job, off-the-job, cross training and technical/professional skills and that line-managers at the hotel units support human capital interventions and vice versa, by encouraging, supporting, guiding, providing feedback to front-line employees to further develop and participate in training.

- Research Question 3: Does organisational support towards training have a positive relationship with the adequacy of training facilities and services?

Organisational support towards training was strongly correlated and significant with the adequacy of training facilities and services  $r=.62$ ,  $p<.001$ . It implies that there is a strong and positive relationship between organisational support towards training and the adequacy of training facilities and services. This means that the different types of training offered by the organisation towards the development of front-line employees is related to the quality, length, content of training, training techniques, and funding of training.

- Research Question 4: Does management support towards training have a positive relationship with the adequacy of training facilities and services?

Management support towards training was moderately correlated and significant with the adequacy of training facilities and services  $r=.58$ ,  $p<.001$ . It suggests that management support has a positive relationship with the adequacy of training facilities and service. It suggests that line-managers support towards training in terms of enhancing and encouraging participation, granting access, coaching, providing feedback after the training to front-line employees is moderately related to the quality, trainers' knowledge, training techniques, and length of courses and funding of training.

- Research Question 5: Does the adequacy of training facilities and services have a positive relationship with perceived benefits of training?

The adequacy of training facilities and services was moderately correlated and significant with the perceived benefits related to skills, knowledge and abilities  $r=.50$ ,  $p<.001$ . In



addition, the adequacy of training facilities and services was moderately correlated with the perceived benefits related to attitudes and behaviours  $r=.55$ ,  $p<.001$ . Hence, these correlations support that the adequacy of training facilities and services has a positive relationship with the perceived benefits of training.

Due to the new dimension the perceived benefits related to KSA had the highest correlation with the perceived benefits related to attitudinal and behavioural skills  $r=.68$ ,  $p<.001$ . It was expected though to have a strong relationship since they fall under the same construct of perceived benefits as a result of training, in line with the suggested model.

Organisational support towards training was moderately correlated with the perceived benefits of knowledge, skills and abilities  $r=.53$ ,  $p<.001$ . It suggests that organisational support towards training has a positive relationship with the perceived benefits related to knowledge, skills and abilities of front-line employees.

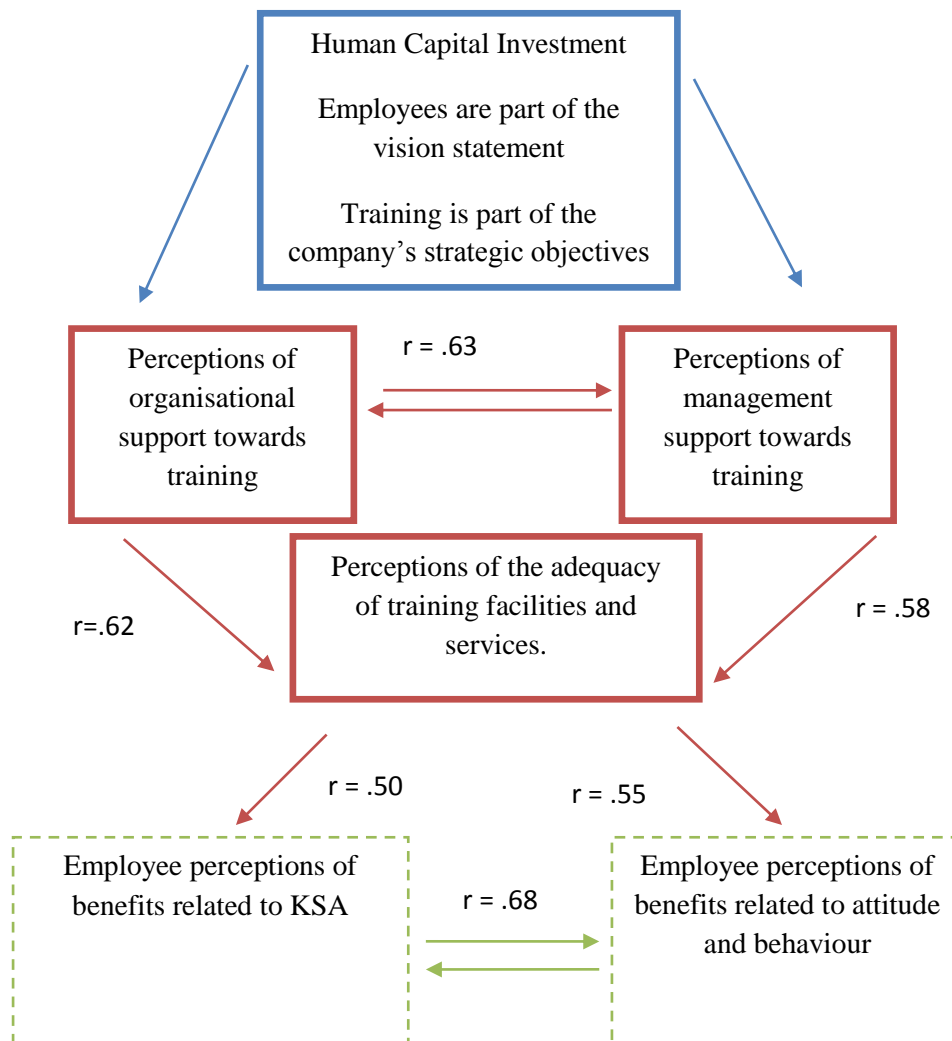
The correlation between organisational support and the perceived benefits related to attitudes and behaviours had a moderate correlation  $r=.59$ ,  $p<.001$ . It implies that organisational support towards training has a positive relationship with the perceived benefits related to attitudes and behaviours of front-line employees.

Management support towards training was moderately correlated with the perceived benefits of attitudes and behaviours  $r=.56$ ,  $p<.001$ . It implies that management support has a positive relationship with the perceived benefits related to attitudes and behaviours of front-line employees.

The correlation between management support and the perceived benefits related to knowledge, skill and abilities had a low correlation of  $r=.35$ ,  $p<.001$ , the weakest correlation amongst the other construct correlations. This finding suggests that line-managers should reinforce more in the workplace the acquired knowledge, skills and abilities of front-line employees by possibly recognizing, rewarding, and praising the applicability of those competencies in the work environment.

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### Model 3: Training model based on quantitative findings.



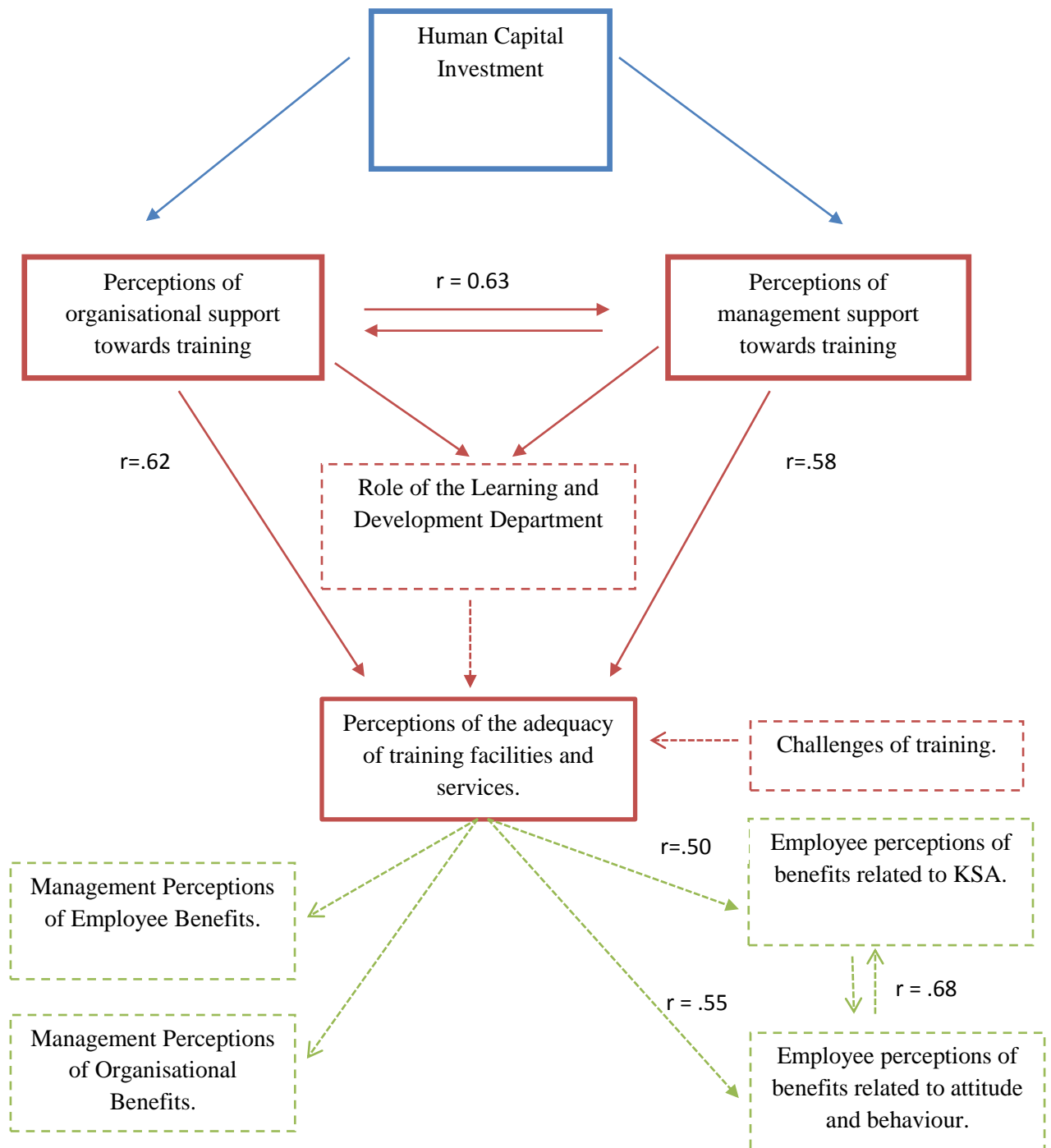
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### 6.4. DATA TRIANGULATION.

As a result of the entire study and based on the qualitative and quantitative results discussed above, after using data triangulation, the following model has emerged which supports the fifth aim of this study. The fifth aim is:

- To develop a training model underlining the importance of HCI and its constructs within five star hotels in Dubai (U.A.E.).

**Model 4: Training model based on data triangulation.**



Model 4 suggests, based on the qualitative results, that HCI is supported by the company through its training philosophy, values, and strong belief in HC for the development of its employees as well as the company's performance. Employees are regarded as human assets,

and hence the identification and needs for employees' training and development is a high priority and part of the corporate executive agenda. Moreover, part of the vision statement of the company is that in order to be a well-known reputable hospitality company, dedication and commitment to its employees is the driving force behind the organisation's success, expansion and growth. The company's training philosophy has its root in inspiration, making a difference, and on the impact of learning resulting in organisational success and effective succession planning. In order to prove that the company is committed to HCI, training is the main wheel used to cascade the message and prove to its workforce its value, through the on-going support towards training, learning, and developmental activities.

Therefore, these efforts are reflected in the organisational support towards training which encompass different aspects and types of training interventions provided to front-line employees. In addition, these efforts are reflected based on management support towards training reinforced by the commitment, encouragement, follow up, and support of line-managers to front-line employees, in order to increase front-line employees' participation, engagement, and transfer of training in the workplace.

Quantitative results show that organisational support towards training and management support towards training are two inter-related dimensions showing a strong relationship amongst them  $r=.63$ ,  $p<.001$ . Overall, the organisation is good in providing training and development interventions and hence employees consider that the organisation values their contribution and cares about their well-being. Similarly, employees overall are satisfied with management support towards training and hence employees consider that the line-managers and supervisors take care of their developmental needs and goals. Each of these dimensions is associated with the adequacy of training facilities and services. Organisational support has a stronger relationship  $r=.62$ ,  $p<.001$ . than management support towards training  $r=.58$ ,  $p<.001$ . with the adequacy of the training environment.

However, a new dimension based on the qualitative findings was emerged and added to the model reflecting on the important role the L&D Department plays and its core function in each hotel ensuring that training, learning, and development is initiated, planned, structured, and resourced by the company. Consequently, it is noticeable that the company is fully committed by having in each hotel an L&D department fully dedicated to HCI. Besides the economic downturns even if the centralized training centre was closed down, and redundancies of L&D personnel were made, the company still retains L&D departments in

each hotel unit instead of a centralized L&D centre, demonstrating the criticality of this support department to the overall function of the hotels. Nevertheless, despite the fact that the L&D function is a well-established department and operates effectively, they face different training challenges affecting the adequacy of the training environment. These challenges are due to the diversity of front-line employees, gender imbalance of the workforce, language barriers, heavy reliance on migrants and expatriates, issues with recruitment, lack of attraction of suitable candidates, front-line employee skills deficiencies, lack of hospitality work experience of front-line employees, and lack of knowledge of front-line employees regarding niche markets. Furthermore, the L&D department encounters lack of line-managers support towards training influencing the transfer of training by front-line employees in the work environment.

Moreover, the role and function of the L&D department is related to the adequacy of the training environment concerning the training facilities, services, and provision of training programmes. The L&D department has a number of job duties and tasks. As a department, it oversees the quality of training, it acquires feedback to enhance the quality of the training interventions, it monitors the results of quality delivered in the hotels through reports from mystery visits, to guest comments card, to quality audits. Furthermore, as a department it provides developmental opportunities to the trainers in order to increase their level of professionalism, it conducts the LNA, it creates the training budget, and it prepares long-term and short-term plans of training. Then these training plans are been communicated through the annual training calendar, it plans the training courses, it allocates the required resources requested by trainers, it books training venues, it oversees the materials and planning of other logistics, it assists in the execution of training, and lastly it evaluates training. Nevertheless, the main weakness refers to the measurement of human capital interventions and hence an area of improvement amongst others. Even though hotels invest a substantial amount in training, measuring ROI is still a challenge for L&D professionals.

Consequently, the function of the L&D department reflects on the adequacy of the training environment, which encompass the quality of training programmes, trainers' knowledge and expertise, content and material of training programmes, training techniques, physical working conditions of the training venues, food and beverage services offered during training sessions, purposes of training, and length of training programmes and funding. Employees' perceptions showed satisfactory levels with the adequacy of training facilities and services and L&D management perceptions reflected positive results with the training environment, even though

managers suggested that there is need for further investment, funding, utilisation of new training techniques, updated material, and further development of trainers.

The adequacy of training facilities and services is associated with the perceived benefits. Based on the qualitative results L&D managers supported that the perceived benefits relate to employees, to the organisation and to the customers and hence two new dimensions were added to the model. L&D management perceptions support that the outcomes of training can be seen in terms of employees career growth and progression, changing employees' attitude and behaviours, and improving employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities. In regards to the organisational benefits, L&D managers believed that training positively affects business growth, financial performance, the reputation of five star hotels worldwide, and consistency of quality and company standards. Furthermore, HCI results in increased guest loyalty, increased guest satisfaction, repeat customers, and provision of five star luxury experiences to guests. Additionally, HCI leads in the creation of development employee opportunities, employee growth, employee loyalty and retention, employee empowerment and employee engagement.

Based on the results of the factor analysis, the perceived benefits of front-line employees were broken down into two dimensions, referring to perceived benefits related to knowledge, skills and abilities, and perceived benefits related to attitude and behaviour. The adequacy of training facilities and services had a moderate relationship between the benefits related to KSA and benefits related to attitude and behaviour. Interestingly enough though, employees perceived that the adequacy of training facilities and services had a slightly stronger relationship with employees perceived benefits in regards to attitude and behaviour  $r=.55$ ,  $p<.001$ . than to knowledge, skills, and abilities  $r=.50$ ,  $p<.001$ .

Lastly, the strongest relationship, was inter-related between employees perceptions of benefits related to KSA and employees perceptions of benefits related to attitude and behaviour  $r=.68$ ,  $p<.001$ . This implies that the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and abilities has a stronger relationship with the benefits related to attitude and behaviour, as a result of training. Hence, supporting the increased provision of customer service to guests, increased front-line employees' confidence, job involvement and job performance, increased job productivity, increased levels of competencies, increased intellectual agility, and readiness for promotion. All of the above are strongly associated with employees affective commitment, employee engagement, increased motivation, increased value hence perceived

organisational support, job satisfaction and entitlement for recognition through a rewards or incentive and vice versa reflecting positively in the HCI provided by the company.

## **CHAPTER 7 – CONCLUSION.**

### **7.1. CONCLUSION.**

Investment in human capital (HC) through education and training and individual output depends to a certain extent on the rate of return on the human capital the individual possesses. HC is a way of production, into which additional investment produces additional output (Becker, 1964). This study demonstrates that the concept of HC is important in the hospitality sector in Dubai, (U.A.E), despite the fact that it is not considered as a labour-surplus country which is in contrast to the literature that identifies HC as more important in labour-surplus countries. Despite a high literacy rate of 89.8 per cent in the U.A.E., there is still a high reluctance by U.A.E. Nationals to pursue a higher degree in hospitality and even more hesitancy to join the hospitality industry. This resistance is due to cultural, social, religious, status-quo norms, image of servitude and inferiority, as well as low wages and long working hours, preferring mainly to be employed in the public sector. This subsequently leads to a heavy dependency on migrant labour and expatriates working in the sector, which is reflected in the country's population, which consists of over nine million residents with U.A.E. Nationals accounting for only 12 per cent of the total population (BMI, Q1, 2015). Despite the negative image of the lack of human rights within the Middle East region, and more specifically in the context of the U.A.E. as a country regarding the unfair and inhumane treatment by employers towards construction labourers and domestic helpers there is still a strong willingness for migrants and expatriates to come and work in the country. The U.A.E. is perceived as a land of opportunities due to multiple job prospects, tax free salaries, and a very safe environment in comparison to neighbouring countries (Human Rights Report, 2015).

This study shows that the majority of front-line employees are between 25-34 years old, and almost three quarters of front-line employees are male which was identified as an organisational concern due to gender imbalance and hence initiating an organisational recruitment drive to employ more female staff in the future. In terms of the educational level of front-line employees, this study shows that the majority of front-line employees are educated and the majority possess a Bachelor's degree, which is not the norm for lower level jobs in the hospitality industry. Despite their high educational level, front-line employees migrate from poorer countries in the Asian Subcontinent and South East Asia to seek an employment opportunity and a better future in Dubai. This movement of labour influx is



positive not only for the emirate of Dubai that wants to keep a worldwide reputation of luxury five star hotels and enhance its economic performance through hospitality (over £2,484,860,181 billion in 2011), but also for the countries that migrant labourers originate from. This movement has positive effects, as the U.A.E. is a capital-rich country and attracts an influx in labour that it depends on to ensure future growth. For those countries providing the workforce, the benefit comes from the repatriation of wages to support families at home. While front-line wages in five star hotels in Dubai only correspond to an average salary of £182 to £272 monthly, when adding the additional benefits (free staff accommodation, health care, meal allowances on and off duty, transportation to and from work, uniform dry cleaning, and a return ticket once every two years back to their homeland, plus services charges), the potential total remuneration package which front-line employees receive exceeds by far the wages in their native land. Additionally, a tax-free salary and a very safe environment contribute to Dubai as a preferred work environment. The availability of different positions within Rooms and Food and Beverage areas offers a great chance to apply for a range of job opportunities and receive cross training, which increases knowledge of front-line employees. This is reflected in the range of five star luxury products and services offered to guests, which includes everything from personal butlers to Rolls Royce drivers. A more positive picture is illustrated regarding length of service in current job roles in Dubai, with over a quarter of front-line employees being employed for more than five years implying that even though the hospitality industry suffers from high turnover, people still continue to work in the hospitality industry. Conversely, being in the same job role for over five years could be perceived as quite alarming and may reflect negatively in terms of the organisation's lack of internal talent promotion. Being in the same position for numerous years is also identified as a weak area by management impacting succession planning, and it shows that employee career progression within the organisation can be lengthy and slow, leading to high employee dissatisfaction with career progression and resulting in employee disengagement. In spite of the higher academic qualifications attained by the majority of front-line employees, from a management perspective their HC needs are an outcome of the diversified workforce and refer primarily to employee skills deficiencies. Particularly, language barriers related to low English levels, which are denied by front-line employees since they believe that they obtain higher levels of English proficiency. Other barriers relate to front-line employees lack of five star work experience; lack of luxury service delivery; lack of product knowledge; poor F&B skills; lack of interpersonal skills, and according to past literature it could be reflected in the guests' experience of poor service, increased guest dissatisfaction

and service failure. As a result, there is a negative impact on the hotels' economic performance. Therefore, from a management perspective HC through training interventions is perceived not only as the solution to these issues but as means of demonstrating commitment and dedication by the company to further ameliorate the development and enhancement of front-line employees' knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes and behaviours. The research highlighted a strong belief in HCI within the organisation.

From a front-line employee perspective, there is high agreement regarding organisational support towards training with emphasis on the hotel's provision of induction and cross training although employees felt they still need to offer further off-the-job training. In support of their view, L&D managers identified that the induction training has been reviewed, and that learning takes place mainly on-the-job followed by instructor-led training. Areas of concern from an L&D perspective are the minimum use of E-learning, blended learning, and from time to time heavy dependency on the 'buddy system'. Hence, funding of formal training programmes is minimal for front-line employees demonstrating that the majority of training is run internally with minor exceptions for specialised areas such as health and safety training and English courses. Likewise, L&D managers also supported that organisational values are associated with the positive treatment of HC within the company. Strategic business goals both short-term and long-term are linked to the company's success putting employee training in the organisations' five big plans. Moreover, through the design of the training curriculum, the organisational needs are represented forming the framework and standards that hotels need to follow at an operational level.

From an L&D perspective, management support towards training is crucial both pre and post training, however L&D management had very negative views in regard to the support from line-managers. Concerns were expressed about a number of issues which included: attitudes towards training; following up; coaching; providing feedback; discussing developmental goals and objectives with front-line employees; granting them access to training programmes; inappropriately using employee training hours as a means to achieve management KPIs; and, making ineffective use of IDPs. The views of the L&D managers are contradictory to front-line employees' perceptions of management support towards training with employees identifying high levels of satisfaction with their line-management. This was specifically evident in terms of communication related to the availability of training courses, encouragement/support of employees' training participation and staff developmental activities. Even though front-line employees perceive setting tasks and development goals

satisfactorily, it is an area of improvement according to L&D managers. Hence, this study supports that a strong relationship is evident between organisational and management support towards training.

Another key finding of this study is that companies who value HC would benefit from a dedicated and supported L&D department. Most hospitality companies identified in previous literature have the L&D function as a sub-department and/or function of the Human Resource Department. This study highlights the vital role of the L&D department as an individual department based on its role, functionality, and responsibilities. The L&D department is traditionally identified as a support function, with many companies preferring to cut down on support services that are perceived as unnecessary. Nevertheless, this study supports that the L&D department adds value to the business and positively influences the bottom line, and should be a core department within the business. Overall, the L&D department is in charge of the TNA, programme customization, programme delivery, evaluation, and follow up. In addition, this study shows that the L&D department is in charge of funding any type of training intervention within the availability of its dedicated training budget. One of the most essential tasks of the L&D department is to conduct the TNA, which assists in the identification of organisational, employee, and management training needs. Through the TNA, L&D managers are able to design the training budget, produce the training calendar, identify resources and number of trainers required to run the courses, essential material, special equipment, identify key courses, frequency, and length of courses, and increase quality of training interventions. Furthermore, training is planned according to business levels within each hotel resulting in increased communication between line-managers and L&D managers, which ensures that line-managers grant access to front-line employees. Feedback is another key component for the effective function of the department. Even more, the L&D department monitors guest feedback to ensure that front-line employees are delivering luxury service, follows up on reports from mystery shoppers, guest comments cards and quality audits, requests feedback from trainers, front-line employees and management in regard to the length of training programmes. In addition, feedback from other sister hotel properties to increase training consistency amongst them is requested by the L&D department and it ensures the adherence of the training curriculum set by the company. Trainers' development and training evaluations are also amongst their main responsibilities. Overall, the current efforts of L&D departments within the hotel properties in the devising and delivery of training methods for front-line employees are shown to be effective and efficient but there is

still room for improvement. While this research has for the most part identified the positive aspects of a dedicated L&D department a number of weaknesses were identified in the training provision. These include out-of-date material; the need for further development of trainers, which influences the quality of training; under resourcing in terms of trainers and facilities; lack of benchmarking; programme delivery lacks of innovation in regard to the training techniques used by trainers. Hence, further development and utilisation of more innovative training techniques need improvement. Furthermore, two extremely weak areas are distinguished predominantly in the evaluation and follow up of training. It is apparent that even though L&D departments spend between a .60 to 1 per cent of total hotel revenue on training per hotel, L&D managers fail to measure their per capita spending. Furthermore, training evaluations are conducted through the utilisation of 'happy sheets' and an annual training report; none of the L&D managers measure the return-on-investment albeit the strong support towards the L&D function by the CEO of the company. No HC measurements are in place to justify the HCI, hence, showing deficiencies in reporting ROI. This shows that even though the investment in HC is provided to front-line employees, the L&D department fails to show the value of training to its stakeholders. The L&D department should utilize appropriate metrics to measure HCI and communicate these metrics/KPIs to all line managers. The main aim of KPIs is to assess and quantify areas of the businesses and to enhance the credibility, and value of the L&D department as well as increase appreciation, recognition and partnership with corporate management. Furthermore, it assists in securing funds for the department and boosts their image as an employer of choice (Lockwood, 2006). The use of KPIs can assist in reporting measures that can be included in their annual review and be presented to the corporate office, stakeholders, and general managers of hotels. According to Bruman (2010) the following KPIs are related to training, development, and talent: training investment per full time equivalent (FTE); training hours per full-time equivalent (FTE); return-on-investment (ROI); training penetration rate; human capital value added; operational budget spent on training; employee meeting continuing professional development requirements; technological competence of staff; and certifications per employee.

An alternative evaluation could be considered in terms of the effective use of the BSC in regards the 'learning and growth dimension'. According to Heskett *et al.* (1994), a BSC is utilized as a form of measurement aiming to translate the mission and vision statement of a company into a set of performance measures. The 'learning and growth' dimension, which

refers to employee capabilities, employee lifestyle and well-being, following up employee tools, motivation of employees and goal setting of employees should be clearly identified (Evans, 2005; Kaplan & Norton, 1996). This study shows that the L&D department places emphasis on employee capabilities associated with the TNA. Employee lifestyle and wellbeing assessment is performed using an employee satisfaction survey. Tracking employee tools are utilised but primarily for senior levels. These could be employed to evaluate lower level employees and improve on employees' motivation and goal setting. This would require L&D managers to develop further their understanding of the BSD framework, as suggested by McPhail, Herrington, and Guilding (2008).

Another aspect of this study identifies that there is a direct line between organisational and management support for training and the adequacy of training facilities and services. The adequacy of the training environment is extremely important for the function of the L&D department. The L&D department needs to ensure that every training intervention is initiated and planned for a specific reason, e.g. compulsory training, addressing lack of performance, reducing errors, reducing operating costs, or introducing new technology. Furthermore, the adequacy of the training facilities and services impact on the effectiveness of the L&D department in terms of the quality of training programmes, the trainers' knowledge and expertise, the training material, the location of the training facilities, the physical working conditions of the training facilities, and the F&B services offered during the training sessions. The research indicates that L&D managers are satisfied with the actual training facilities and services provided but viewed further investment and resources as a benefit in terms of increasing the effectiveness of the department. L&D managers also identified a number of challenges to the training environment, which stemmed from HR practices such as recruitment and selection methods, which focus on attitude rather than skills. Other concerns were raised about the shortage of skilled hospitality labour, which has created a very diverse workforce in terms of language, work ethic, and levels of understanding. Where front-line employees are concerned the results indicated high levels of satisfaction with the training facilities in regards to the training venues but less satisfaction with the F&B services. Front-line employees in the company receive an average of 10 hours per month in training, which is well above other industries around the world, currently offering 39 hours per annum. The majority of front-line employees have attended customer service skills training, product knowledge and awareness training, and task specific skills training with just a few front-line employees attending diversity-training programmes concerning the local culture. Hence,

there is a need to increase diversity-training programmes since they are only offered during the induction training for two hours.

HCI, according to established literature results in benefits of training at the individual level and organisational level. L&D managers strongly believe that benefits of training are seen in terms of employees' career growth, development and enhancement of employees' specific skills and competencies, creation of developmental opportunities, happy employees, increased employee loyalty and hence retention of employees, employee empowerment, and employee engagement. Nonetheless, L&D managers believe that at the same time, there are a lack of career opportunities, lack of access to employees' professional growth, false career promises given by line-managers to front-line employees, lack of transparency, and lack of internal promotion. Furthermore, L&D managers agree that HCI generates sustainable business growth, increases company's financial performance, boosts reputation of five star hotels worldwide, assists in further hotel expansion by assigning and preparing talent to new hotel properties, enhances alignment of luxury service delivered to guests, raises company's standards, and builds up company's reputation emphasizing high quality. The organisational benefits also reflect on customers, with increased guest loyalty, repeat clientele, increased guest satisfaction, happy customers, and creation and provision of unique guest experiences. Similarly, front-line employees perceived benefits in regard to knowledge, skills, and abilities as well as attitudes and behaviour. Front-line employees strongly agree that due to training interventions, their knowledge, skills, and abilities improve in relation to customer service delivery, increased confidence levels, increased job performance and job involvement, increased productivity levels, increased competencies, increased intellectual agility and readiness for career progression. Furthermore, front-line employees strongly agree that attitude and behaviour is also affected as a result of training in regard to affective commitment, employee engagement, and increased work motivation, the feeling of being valued by the company reflected positive in perceived organisational support, increased job satisfaction, and entitlement for recognition. Thus, validates the established view that HCI has numerous benefits and a very positive impact on front-line employees as well as the organisation.

Lastly, this study shows that the company believes strongly in HCI and all the efforts and investment in HC result in positive outcomes for front-line employees, customers and the organisation. Nevertheless, L&D managers seem to be more critical of the process, identifying areas of further improvement, and a number of weaknesses and challenges that

need to be overcome in the future. Front-line employees on the other hand seem to be very satisfied with the overall provision of HCI offered by the hotels. This study supports that HCI offered in five star hotels in Dubai (U.A.E.) offers the desired benefits of KSA, attitudes, and behaviours required by front-line employees in the luxury hotel sector, sustaining Dubai's reputation as a worldwide luxury destination.

## **7.2. CONTRIBUTION TO RESEARCH.**

The foundation of this study utilized research from key authors in the field including Abeysekera (2006), Amaize, Mady, and Benson (2011), Baum (2002, 2006, 2007), Becker (1960, 1993), Chiang, Back and Canter (2005), Forstenlechner and Mellahi (2011), Jameson (2000), Hai-yan and Baum (2006), Kirkpatrick (1975), Lashley (2009), (Mellahi, 2007), Phillips (1994), Santos and Stuart (2003), and (Tharenou, 2001), amongst other researchers. This literature combined with the primary results of this study has created a new model (please refer to model 4, chapter 6 section 6.4) of HCI through training contributing to the academic theory of HCI within the five star hotels in Dubai. Furthermore, this research has contributed to a gap in the limited body of knowledge on training and HCI in general and the hospitality industry in particular. Moreover, it is the only study of its kind about HCI through training in five star luxury hotels and the only one in luxury hotels in Dubai, U.A.E. Hence, even though the hospitality industry and in particular the luxury hotel sector is booming within the middle east region limited research is conducted and therefore this study provides a good foundation for future research.

This study presents a more positive image of HCI of front-line employees in five star hotels based in Dubai (U.A.E.). Despite the negativity, surrounding hospitality organisations and insufficient investment in employees presented in the literature, this study shows that the company strongly believes in highly prioritising HC and therefore aligns its strategic objectives and business plan with employee training. Furthermore, adequate investment supports L&D departments in hotel properties rather than being centralised as a corporate function or even clustered. This shows the importance of the L&D department in order to yield positive outcomes of training interventions. Once again, despite the effectiveness and efficiency of the department, the lack of training evaluation and HC measurements are singled out as the main weaknesses.

As a large organisation with over 12,000 employees in total and a diversified workforce with over 100 nationalities the company used in this research is still relatively new to the

hospitality industry with less than three decades in the hospitality sector. Therefore, in order to grow and be successful within the industry delivering luxury products and services, part of their vision statement emphasises the strong organisational commitment and dedication towards its employees. Consequently, training and developmental activities are supported for front-line employees based on a formal framework embracing a structured, systematic, approach rather than the unstructured and ad hoc method, which is presented in the literature. The potential impact that HCI has on organisational success is unquestionable supporting the growth and continuous success of the company. It is reflected mainly on the high quality and professional service offered by front-line employees, which differentiates them from competitors, leading to increased profits and economic performance. Furthermore, it has a positive impact on the company's reputation amongst the niche market.

Organisational and management support, as well as the adequate training environment, all play a crucial role in the effective and positive outcomes of HCI of front-line employees. These dimensions are necessary to create a learning environment and ensure that internal organisational responsibilities are not confined just to the L&D department, but are also seen as the responsibility of the hotel units and line-managers. This supports the view that to create learning environment, different types of training are needed based on each hotel property individually to a certain extent and the identification of training outcomes must be clearly identified. Furthermore, the use of updated and relevant material, alongside the selection of appropriate training methods, is crucial. In order to enhance quality of training, feedback, and communication between line-managers and L&D managers is vital. Furthermore, management support is necessary pre and post training to encourage participation of front-line employees and transfer of training in the workplace.

Moreover, the potential impact of HCI on front-line employees is indisputably positive and is twofold reflecting on front-line employees' benefits in regard to knowledge, skills, and abilities, and in regard to attitude and behaviour, which is clearly distinct and inter-related as a key finding of this study.

It is evident that the five star hotels have a strong belief in HCI and that management as well as organisational support towards training is critical for the success of HC. The additional dimensions of model 4 reflect on the need that hotels have for an exclusive L&D department instead of being a part of the HR department or even as a clustered function. The scope and role of the L&D department consist of the responsibilities as a department, conducting TNA,



obtaining training feedback through various sources, design the training budget, conducting training evaluation and ideally calculating ROI, and ensuring the trainers development.

Because of the functionality of the L&D department, there is an association with the adequacy of the L&D environment, and training provision. The adequacy of the training environment consists of the delivery of effective training programmes, identifying weaknesses of these programmes by either updating, removing or completely changing the training programmes, the utilization of training methods and techniques, and ensuring transfer of training into the workplace. Furthermore, challenges are another construct identified as a factor influencing the adequacy of the training programmes and the provision of training. These challenges faced by L&D management in five star hotels in Dubai refer primarily to the time of conducting the training programmes, the inadequate availability of resources, the need to plan the existing resources well in advance, costs associated with the provision of training programmes, recruitment of newcomers, diverse workforce composition, lack of employees' past work experience and overall employees skills deficiencies. Moreover, even though the literature suggested numerous benefits this study highlights that L&D managers identified that because of HCI through training, the positive outcomes are seen by the organisations as well as by the front-line employees.

The organisational benefits are categorized into benefits linked to the company, to the customers and to the employees. On the other hand, employee benefits based on management perceptions refer to employees' career growth, event though there is a noticeable degree of employees dissatisfaction with career progression, benefits linked to employees' attitude and behaviour and benefits linked to employees KSA. Similarly, front-line employees believe that HCI offered by the hotels through training, has positive outcomes not only on their KSA but also on their attitudes and behaviours. The perceived benefits as outcomes of training related to KSA according to front-line employees comprise of increased competencies to perform the job duties, improving performance, agility, innovation, higher productivity increased customer service, increased confidence at work, and readiness for promotion. On the other hand, the benefits associated to employees' attitude and behaviour reflect on the increased level of enthusiasm and happiness in the workplace, higher motivation, higher satisfaction, feel valued, higher commitment and entitled for a reward/incentive.

Based on the HC theory, the U.A.E. government should view HC as an educational investment contributing towards the country's economic performance and since Dubai and

the U.A.E. in general relies on hospitality and tourism as an outcome of reduced oil reserves then a decision should be made to invest more extensively in HC. HC theory is a predominant economic theory in a Western environment but the indications of this study are that it applies to the hotels but HC does not apply within the broader context of Dubai. As a developing country, there are many opportunities to instil growth through education but here are still many areas of concern. This includes the lack of governmental involvement with regard to the improvement of non-local front-line employees working in the hospitality sector, since training programmes such as the ‘Maharat’ or the latest hospitality and tourism programme called ‘Tourism Talent Incubator’ is available only to U.A.E. Nationals. This type of separation between nationals and non-nationals for free vocational education does not create a quality labour force, which is supposed to be one of the positive outcomes of HC. Even though hotels are providing training either in the format of ‘general training’ or ‘company-specific training’, the lack of education and training combined together does not result in HC being advanced which is considered as an economic and social tool for the nation. Hence, the researcher for further potential research raises the following question:

*Given the economic contribution of hospitality and tourism in Dubai, and the U.A.E. as a whole, why does the government not invest in the provision of formal training for the development of front-line hotel employees?*

Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that vocational education is absent from the educational curriculum. As a country, offering HC opportunities through free education to its active workforce without selecting based on nationalities primarily in sectors that sustain the economic growth of the country should definitely be considered as a solution for future investment. Even though the government is currently implementing new vocational schemes, it is only available to U.A.E. Nationals excluding the rest.

### **7.3. LIMITATIONS.**

This study used a mixed methods approach, which is proven suitable for the topic under investigation. Nevertheless, the researcher faced a number of challenges reflected mainly to the lack of access to other hospitality organisations. Hotels are reluctant to share openly information since in this part of the world this is perceived as inappropriate and against company policies. In addition, a change of management with two hotels is reflected in the survey being distributed only to four hotels out of the six hotels originally in the sample, the

lack of secondary information regarding the topic of HCI in the U.A.E., and the lack of updated and translated information from Arabic into English regarding governmental reports/statistics.

Despite the above-mentioned limitations, further improvements can be made in regard to the study's methodological approach as explained below. Reflecting on the entire research process, the researcher did learn how to find suitable solutions as well as change the process of collecting primary data and hence adjusting to each situation. Even though, the research methodology was adopted and carried out as per the original plan, the place/location and time of the data collection for both Phase I and Phase II (Qualitative and Quantitative) had to be adjusted resulting in the enhancement of the researcher's skills adding though additional stress to the researcher at times. Furthermore, the length of time in conducting this research could have been decreased if the researcher enrolled in a full-time programme but due to financial constraints that was impossible.

As one of the first studies related to HCI through training conducted in the middle east region this research could be used to further enrich the existing theoretical frameworks that have been created in a western context.

Furthermore, since this study is conducted in the Middle East region and more specifically in Dubai, U.A.E., and HCI is a westernized perspective, it suggests that HCI through a training model can be further applied to Middle Eastern nations. For instance, it can be used in Qatar; a neighbouring country to the U.A.E. Currently Qatar is also a developing nation with a similar model of Dubai's five star hotel growth. Qatar's hotel sector is expanding rapidly prior to the World Cup 2022, which will be hosted in its capital, Doha. As a result new hotel developments could apply the suggested training model and additionally the Qatari government could look into the country's HCI needs by providing vocational hospitality education to front-line employees, in order to ensure the economic growth of the nation based on tourism receipts.

However, a number of limitations are addressed. For instance, a limitation of this actual study is to statistically test the perceptions of front-line employees about the role of the L&D department, as well as their perceptions in regard to their personal contribution towards the organisational benefits as a result of training. Although the perceptions of front-line employees in regard to the adequacy of the training was tested statistically and reflected on the effective role of the L&D department a clear construct with variables should have been

included. Furthermore, the results of front-line employees' perceived benefits as a result of training demonstrate that due to increased and developed areas in regard to knowledge, skills, abilities, attitude, and behaviour consequently result in organisational benefits but again a construct with variables related to organisational benefits should be tested statistically.

In order to be able to generalise further the research, access is required to a number of international and regional hotel chains having in their portfolio five star luxury hotels operating in Dubai (U.A.E.). Consequently, it will assist to make a comparison of hospitality companies in order to identify to what extent hotel companies invest in HC and if the outcomes of these investments are positive or not.

Furthermore, this research can be further developed by interviewing C-suite executives to identify the corporate learning and development strategies, identifying how the organisations' business objectives are actually associated with the L&D strategy and what the expectations and returns are from HCI in the eyes of corporate executives and shareholders.

Emiratization directors or managers could also be interviewed to identify how the localisation strategy is actually implemented in the hotel companies and by discovering pros and cons of actual efforts, and additionally, how the Emiratization strategy of the hotel companies is actually complying with the guidelines set by the government.

Finally, line-managers' perceptions should also be included so to recognise and evaluate the efforts of the L&D department and actual line-management expectations of HCI of front-line employees.

Lastly, this study shows that HCI through training is very crucial for the hospitality industry focusing on front-line non managerial employees, five star hotels, and Dubai as a developing and luxurious travel destination supported by the model of HCI through training. Training, learning, and development opportunities are available for front-line employees however; with a greater support, involvement and development of vocational education by the state, the success, positioning and growth of the luxury hotel sector can be further improved and Dubai can become even more lavish as an emirate attracting millions of tourists from all over the world.

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# APPENDICES

**APPENDIX A**

**-**

**INTERVIEW  
SCHEDULE**

## **Part I - Labor workforce composition**

Q1a. What is the demographic profile of front-line employees?

Q1b. What is your personal opinion in reference to the following statement: “Training challenges are increasing due to the diverse workforce”?

## **Part II - Counting the value of training & learning**

Q2. Which is the training philosophy within your company?

Q3. Which is your perception of the current investment in learning and training?

Q4. In your opinion is there a shift from on-the job training and off the job training to learning or not?

Q5. Does the training represent the needs of individual people, their managers or the organization?

Q6. Past studies have demonstrated that investing in human capital and investing in on/off the job training is a competitive strategy so to generate sustainable growth and wealth. Which are your thoughts with the statement above?

Q7. How far in advance are your training programs planned? Do you have an annual training calendar communicated across the hotel unit (s)?

Q8. How valuable is the contribution of training and development to the performance of the organization?

Q9. How important is staff training in relation to the achievement of the short term performance goals of the organization?

Q10. How important is staff training in relation to the achievement of the long term performance goals of the organization?

Q11. How training compares to other organizational initiatives in regards to the financial investment?

Q12. If employees needs are considered to be both important and specific, what will top management need to do to ensure that the social climate within the organization is sympathetic to the idea of learning as a high priority for everyone?

## **Part III - Reasons for training**

Q13. How important is the development of your employees' skills to the company economic performance?

Q14. Which is the main reason for training for front-line employees?

Q15. In your organization, are training plans produced following the evaluation from quality audits

i.e. mystery visits/shoppers, guest comments cards etc?

Q16. Developing front-line employees' careers is the key to the company's success. For instance, White Lodging services goal is 65% of all-promote-able positions are promoted from within. Which is your targeted percentage to develop and promote internally?

Q17. In your opinion, does employee recruitment have an impact on training?

#### **Part IV - Methods / tools used in training**

Q18. Based on the following facts:

- about 70% of organisational learning takes place on the job, through solving problems and through special assignments and other day-to-day activities
- About 20% occurs through drawing knowledge of others in the workplace (informal learning, coaching, mentoring and support and direction from managers and colleagues)
- 10% occurs through formal learning, whether classroom, workshop or e-learning.

Based on the above, in your company which is the breakdown of the learning to your employees?

Q19. Which training methods and tools are mainly used by your organisation?

Q20. What is the most significant weakness in your organization's training programs?

Q21. What actions are you undertaking or planning in future for improving the training function in your organization?

Q22. How much is your per capita spending on training?

Q23. How do you calculate the ROI within your company?

#### **Part V - Length of training**

Q24. How do you determine the length of the training programs?

Q25. When do you release your employees to attend training in regards the time of the day?

Q26. Do you have annual manpower and training plans based on assessment of current occupational training needs?

#### **Part VI - Cost of training**

Q27. How do you identify the training costs?

Q28. Who finances internal training?

Q29. Who finances external training?

**Part VII - Training Evaluation**

Q30. Is training being evaluated in your company? If so, by whom and how?

Q31. Do you train your trainers? Please explain your response.

**APPENDIX B**

**-**

**OBSERVATION  
SCHEDULE**



## PART I : Venue

- Date: ..... Time: .....
- Location:.....
- Sign Posting was easy to find and accessible  
Yes/no.....
- Set up of classroom: ☐ Classroom style ☐ banquet style ☐ u shape style
- Trainer welcome participants upon arrival Yes/no.....
- Physical working conditions in the room:

Air condition	poor	adequate	good
Lighting	poor	adequate	good
Audio visual equipment	poor	adequate	good
Refreshments	poor	adequate	good

## PART II: Demographics

- Companies  
☐ Participants are from the same hotel company ☐ Participants are from different hotel companies
- Who attended the training session?  
☐ Rooms division ☐ Food and Beverage division ☐ Mixed from both departments  
☐ Other (specify).....
- Numbers of participants  
☐ 1-5pax ☐ 6-10 pax ☐ 11-15 pax ☐ 16-20 pax ☐ over 20 pax
- Gender  
☐ Female – No of pax ..... ☐ Male – No of pax.....
- Positions  
☐ Front of house – No of pax ..... ☐ Back of house – No of pax.....  
☐ Other – No of pax .....
- Origin of participants  
☐ UAE Nationals – No of pax .....  
☐ Other Middle Eastern (GCC) – No of pax .....  
☐ Non-arabic speaking African countries – No of pax .....  
☐ Asia Subcontinent – No of pax .....  
☐ South East Asian Countries – No of pax .....  
☐ Western & Eastern European countries– No of pax .....

☐ Central Asia, Russia & CIS – No of pax .....

☐ Central & South America– No of pax .....

☐ North America– No of pax .....

☐ Australia & South Pacific– No of pax .....

### **PART III: Training information**

Did training session commence on time? Yes/ No.....

Did training session finish on time? Yes/ No.....

What is the topic of the training session? Was it introduced? Yes/ No.....

.....  
.....

Were the aims/objectives introduced to the participants? Yes/ No.....

Was the training agenda established and how? Yes/ No.....

.....  
.....

What is the length of training?

☐ ½ day                      ☐ 1-2days                      ☐ 3-5 days                      ☐ over 6 days

☐ Other .....

- Why is this training needed?

☐ Because the participants need new information or skills?

☐ Because they need to change existing working practices?

☐ Because they have asked for it?

☐ Because everyone else has been on that training course.

☐ Because it is part of personal on-going development.

- Did the training session provide generic skills or specific work related skills to the participants?

.....  
.....  
.....

- Which is the training aids used in order to facilitate the training session?

Whiteboard? Yes/ No.....

OHP? Yes/ No.....

Flip charts? Yes/ No.....

Visual display material? Yes/ No.....

Audio Yes/ No.....

- Which is the training techniques used for the delivery of the session?

- ☐ the lecture                      ☐ learning through questions    ☐ the demonstration
- ☐ adventure learning              ☐ the technical training              ☐ individual learning
- ☐ feedback                      ☐ interactive training              ☐ discussion and group learning
- ☐ the role play

- What type of information was included during the training session?

☐ First Part

.....

.....

☐ Second Part

.....

.....

.....

Is there a follow up? Yes/ No.....

- Did the target audience participate in the discussions/exercises? Yes/ No.....

.....

- Was there a training evaluation sheet given to the participants at the end so to evaluate the training course?

Yes/ No.....

- Were the learning outcomes of this training been achieved? Yes/ No.....

Further comments / observations:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**APPENDIX C**

**-**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

Dear respondent,

I am PhD student at Manchester Metropolitan University in the United Kingdom and I am conducting a survey related to human capital investment for front-line non managerial employees in the service sector.

One of the objectives of this study is to understand your personal views towards training, learning and development within the company.

If you choose to participate, please do not write your name on the questionnaire, since it is an anonymous survey. Your responses will not be identified with you personally. I hope you will take a few minutes to complete this questionnaire. Your participation is voluntary and there is no penalty if you do not participate. Any information provided will remain strictly confidential.

If you have any further queries, please feel free to contact me on tel: 00 971 50 624 7498 or e-mail: [loanna.karanikola@emiratesacademy.edu](mailto:loanna.karanikola@emiratesacademy.edu) or if you prefer you could contact my director of studies at Manchester Metropolitan University Mrs. Rita Ralston on tel: 0034 161 247 2734 or e-mail: [r.ralston@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:r.ralston@mmu.ac.uk).

Yours faithfully,

Ioanna Karanikola MSc, BA (Hons).

## **SECTION A: Demographics**

**A1. What is your gender?** *(Please tick (✓) one of the following)*

- ☐ Male ☐ Female

**A2. What is your age?** *(Please tick (✓) one of the following)*

- ☐ Under 20 years ☐ 20-24 years ☐ 25-29 years ☐ 30-34 years  
☐ 35-39 years ☐ 40-49 years ☐ 50-59 years ☐ 60 years and over

**A3. What is your country of origin?** *(Please tick (✓) one of the following)*

- ☐ UAE National
- ☐ Other Middle Eastern (GCC) and Arabic Speaking countries (e.g. Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, Lebanon, Tunisia, Morocco)
- ☐ Non-Arabic speaking African countries (e.g. Nigeria, South Africa)
- ☐ Asia Subcontinent (e.g. India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal)
- ☐ South-East Asian countries (e.g. China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Philippines, Myanmar, Malaysia, Thailand, Japan, Korea)
- ☐ Western & Eastern European countries (e.g. U.K., Germany, France, Spain, Hungary)
- ☐ Central Asia, Russia & CIS countries (e.g. Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Georgia)
- ☐ Central & South America (e.g. Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Argentina)
- ☐ North America (e.g. USA, Canada)
- ☐ Australia & South Pacific (e.g. New Zealand)

**A4. In which hotel are you currently working?** *(Please tick (✓) one of the following)*

- ☐ Hotel A ☐ Hotel B  
☐ Hotel C ☐ Hotel D

**A5. What is your current job position?** *(Please tick (✓) one of the following)*

- ☐ Concierge ☐ Bell boy ☐ Guest relations ☐ Receptionist  
☐ Waiter ☐ Host ☐ Bartender ☐ Cashier  
☐ Trainee / Intern ☐ Other (Please specify)
- 

**A6. How long have you worked at your current job position?** *(Please tick (✓) one of the following)*

- ☐ Less than 1 year ☐ 1 - 2 years ☐ 3 - 4 years ☐ 5 years or more

**A7. What is your monthly salary excluding benefits & service charges?** *(Please tick (✓) one of the following)*

- ☐ Less than 1000 AED
 ☐ 1000-1500 AED
 ☐ 1501-2000 AED  
☐ 2001-2500 AED
 ☐ 2501-3000 AED
 ☐ More than 3000 AED

**A8. What is your highest attained qualification?** *(Please tick (✓) one of the following)*

- ☐ No qualification
 ☐ Primary School  
☐ Secondary School
 ☐ Some college credit, but less than 1 year  
☐ 1 or more years of college, no degree (incomplete)
 ☐ Higher National Certificate (e.g. HNC)  
☐ Higher National Diploma (e.g. HND)
 ☐ Bachelor's degree (e.g. BA, BS)  
☐ Master's degree (e.g. MA, MS, MEng, MBA)
 ☐ Professional degree (e.g. MD, LLB)  
☐ Doctorate degree (e.g. PhD)

**A9. Which is your native language?** *(Please tick (✓) one of the following)*

- ☐ Arabic
 ☐ English
 ☐ Filipino
 ☐ Malay  
☐ Hindi
 ☐ Urdu
 ☐ German
 ☐ French  
☐ Russian
 ☐ Italian
 ☐ Spanish  
☐ Mandarin
 ☐ Burmese
 ☐ Other (please specify)

**A10. What is your level of English proficiency? Rating your language skills from 1 being the lowest to 5 being the highest?** *(Please tick (✓) on the right column)*

	1 (low)	2	3	4	5 (high)
In listening					
In speaking					
In reading					
In writing					

## **SECTION B: Organizational Support towards training.**

**B1. How good is the organization in providing the following?** (Please tick (✓) one of each in the right column.)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
My organization provides its employees with good induction training.					
My organization provides its employees with good technical/ professional skills training.					
My organization provides its employees with good off –the-job training (e.g. training given to employees away from their work place such as at a college or school).					
My organization provides its employees with good on-the-job training (e.g. training given to employees at their work place).					
My organization provides its employees with good cross training (e.g. training given to employees in different job roles or different departments).					

## **SECTION C: Management Support towards training.**

**C1. What is your level of satisfaction with your supervisor/manager support towards your own personal training, learning and development needs?** (Please tick (✓) one of each in the right column.)

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
My supervisor informs me of available training courses.					
My supervisor encourages and supports me to take part in training and development opportunities.					
My supervisor regularly discusses my personal training and development needs with me.					
My supervisor jointly sets tasks and development goals with me.					
My supervisor reviews my progress and provides me with feedback.					
My supervisor coaches and guides me effectively.					



## **SECTION D: Adequacy of training facilities and services**

**D1. Regarding the adequacy of the training facilities and services offered by the organization, what is your level of satisfaction with:** *(Please tick (✓) one of each in the right column.)*

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
The quality of the training courses you have attended.					
The trainers' knowledge and expertise.					
The training material (e.g. handouts).					
The location of the training facilities.					
The physical working conditions in the room (e.g. AC, lighting, audio visual equipment).					
The food and beverage services (e.g. refreshments, meals, breaks).					

## **SECTION E: Perceived benefits of training**

**E1. What is your level of agreement with the following statements? As a result of training:** *(Please tick (✓) one of each in the right column.)*

As a result of training,	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I am more competent to perform my duties at the level of existing requirements.					
I am constantly improving and doing things better.					
I am able to be more innovative, more creative and suggestive of new ideas.					
I am more productive at work.					
I am more capable of providing high customer service to our guests.					
I am more enthusiastic and happy in my workplace.					
I feel more confident at work.					
I feel more motivated at work.					

I feel satisfied with my job.					
I feel valued by the company.					
I feel committed to the organization.					
I am entitled for a reward/ incentive.					
I am ready for a promotion.					

## SECTION F: Training Programs

**F1. What do you consider to be the main purpose of the training programs you have attended?**  
(You could tick (✓) more than one answer)

- ☐ To equip employees with task specific skills necessary to perform the job effectively (e.g. cashiering, telephone skills)
- ☐ To learn foreign languages (e.g. elementary level in Arabic, English, Chinese, Russian etc)
- ☐ To get familiar with the local culture (e.g. laws, customs & traditions of the Middle Eastern culture)
- ☐ To develop customer service skills and positive attitudes (e.g. customer complaint handling)
- ☐ To develop product knowledge and awareness
- ☐ To develop interpersonal skills (e.g. social skills)
- ☐ To develop team working skills
- ☐ To develop career awareness

**F2. Which training techniques have been used by the facilitator during the training courses you have attended?** (You could tick (✓) more than one answer)

- ☐ Reading assignments/case studies
- ☐ Field trips
- ☐ Tutorials
- ☐ Internet conferences learning
- ☐ Scripts (i.e. telephone)
- ☐ E-
- ☐ Role plays / instructional games/ drill-and-practice presentations
- ☐ Lectures and/or audio/visual
- ☐ Distance education systems & technologies
- ☐ Group discussions
- ☐ Cultural assimilator/coaching specify)\_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Other (please

**F3. Do the training programs you have attended form part of your personal development plan?**  
(Please tick (✓) one of the following)

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't know

**F4. How many hours of in-house training do you receive in a typical month?**

\_\_\_\_\_ hours

**F5. Have you attended any formal training (e.g. an external course, seminar or workshop that has particular objectives of learning and is conducted outside the workplace) in your current employment in the past 12 months? *If the answer is Yes then proceed to F6.***

☐ Yes

☐ No

**F6. Who has been financing the formal training (e.g. external course, seminar or workshop) you have attended in your current employment in the past 12 months? *(You could tick (✓) more than one answer)***

☐ Self-funded

☐ Employer

☐ Government / local authorities

☐ Other (please specify)

\_\_\_\_\_

**Many thanks for completing the survey.**

**APPENDIX D**

**-**

**INTERVIEW  
TRANSCRIPT**

*Interviewer: What is the demographic profile of frontline employees?*

---

**L&D Director A:** You want percentages? Or...

*Interviewer:* No, but general estimate

**L&D Director A:** hmm

*Interviewer: or how many nationalities you may have.*

**L&D Director A:** Our top nationalities for frontline, erm, if I can remember correctly are Indian, ah, Filipino, Sri Lankan, erm... Those are our top ones. We actually have weighted percentages cos we did it in an activity a few weeks ago and I saw that question and I'd like to find out specifics.

*Interviewer:* ok

**L&D Director A:** and let you know some more detail on that

*Interviewer: what is your personal opinion in reference to the following statement: training challenges are include- increasing due to the diverse workforce.*

---

**L&D Director A:** English

[laughs]

**L&D Director A:** English is er, is our biggest, biggest challenge. And er, I think here at Berge we spend more on English than any other property I've worked in yet, still. There are just so many people that need like – when I first arrived here last year we had 500 colleagues, just under 500 that needed to be assessed still. We've got that down to 40, but still there's 40 people that need to be assessed. And then all the different levels, in terms of people that need to go through the intense 18-class programme – it just takes a long time for them to go from a level zero to a one, from a one to a two... so our target this year is to get everyone to a level three that's guest-facing. But that's our biggest challenge by far, with such a diverse workforce.

*Interviewer: Can I ask you something? In terms of the English classes that you actually provide them: are they doing them in-house, or are they doing them in a learning centre?*

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**L&D Director A:** In-house. In-house, yeah.

*Interviewer:* yeah

**L&D Director A:** so we tend to send roughly about 30 colleagues a month to our corporate head office area. I try and have all the courses in-house because a lot of our colleagues can't drive, and so a kind of 2-hour English class can tend to be a 5-hour English class with bus

journeys added to it, so operationally it's not effective at all either – and, but then it's a huge inconvenience, it's too hot, doesn't make them feel very motivated. So we run, er, classes every single month, and we have a year English training schedule as well.

*Interviewer: mm-hmm*

**L&D Director A:** We only focus here at this property for zero, one, two and three. Fours and fives, when you're at a very strong level English, business English, we tend to send more colleagues to the centre, because there's fewer people that need to go. The huge people, you know, the large groups, um, where we really need people to be able to converse to that level of a three, is where we're focussing on running in-house.

*Interviewer: Ok. Which is the training philosophy within your company?*

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**L&D Director A:** Ah we have a mission that's all about um, as a corporate company, ah, and a regional mission that's all about us inspiring and making a difference, um, and seeing career growth, and, and progression as we go through. So it's a statement that kind of weaves those kind of words in really, as our... for here at the Berge, ours is all about creating ultimate experiences one guest at a time.

*Interviewer: Ok. Which is your perception of the current investment in learning and training?*

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**L&D Director A:** Oh, we need to invest more. We're sitting at about 0.72% at the moment investment here for this property. And really what we're striving to do per property is have that at 1%. Erm. We did a recent er... HR conference with everybody under the Dubai holding group. And some of those properties, er, some of those companies like for example, erm... T-Com are going for nearly 4%, some of them, some of those businesses. So I think we're really below. I think what we do.. impact wise and resultwise is still incredible in terms of what we have in terms of resources. I think here when I arrived here a year ago, we had one office downstairs, a nice team established in terms of positions –so enough people, but one office and one training room. And we now – and that training room was a dual-purpose room, it was computer-based, English-based, and you know, general training based, that was the room. And we now have our two full suites, which we permanently use as training facilities they seat 30 packs, and we've turned the room downstairs into a computer room and we obviously now have this office as well. But I think it's hugely underresourced in all of our properties. Um, yeah, very much so.

*Interviewer: In your opinion is there a shift from on-the-job training to learning, or not?*

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**L&D Director A:** What do you mean by that, on the job?

*Interviewer: Erm... from training er to learning?*

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**L&D Director A:** So in a classroom style

*Interviewer:* In a classroom style

**L&D Director A:** To then -

*Interviewer:* To...

**L&D Director A:** Being on the job. Erm. Yes I think there is. And I think we just always need to be aware of that in terms of that when you're on the job, er, sorry when you're in that classroom there's enough review and follow-through to ensure

**L&D Director A:** [interruption] hi, how are you?

**L&D Director A:** *I gave you the order?*

**L&D Director A:** We'll just literally take it off here, that's great. Beautiful – thanks very much

**L&D Director A:** So a quick answer is yes, there is. And we need to provide a lot of evaluation and reinforcement towards – to ensure that what is learnt in the classroom continues. Erm and as I say, there's that accountability erm... so, so yes, there is.

*Interviewer: Ok. How specific are the learning needs of the frontline employees in terms that they require tailor-made rather than general solutions? So tailor-made training rather than generic.*

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**L&D Director A:** Hmm. The learning needs I think for our colleagues here are.... tend to be very general. They really do, in terms of, you know, if you fit it into the general curriculum, I would say general in that sense because there's a huge proportion of people that need, for example, to be able to understand how to manage complaints. How to answer the telephone, that need English training. Er... that need to know about basic etiquette, you know of different cultures and nationalities. Um. so I think that you can group a lot of people needing to go through generic courses. Same if you look at our leaders, you know, them needing to go through supervisory skills; they all tend to need that. Er. Whether they're from Dubai, whether they're from other countries, and really doesn't matter how long their service here is as well, they all tend to um, have moved through ranks quite quickly, and perhaps really needing leadership skills. Very, very generic. I've yet to find a leader that kind of... has it all, you know, and so we tailor make it in terms of an individual development plan, but it's all plucked from a very generic curriculum.

*Interviewer: Does the training represent the needs of individual people, their managers or the organisation?*

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**L&D Director A:** That's a very nice question. Uh, it represents the needs of the individual people. Er, however we're teaching the managers still how to do that. And I refer to the individual development plan as well. To give you an idea, we had around 330 individual development plans that came through so far this year, in paper-based form; and only 104 of them I'm accepting; the rest are going back to the leaders. So you could say that prior to that their managers would've been the correct answer in terms of it was representing interest in this, and the organisation was represented, but I'm very passionate about that not being acceptable, and when you can see a plan and you don't have a curriculum fitting into it – or the academy, or the other courses that we have, um, you know then that needs to go back. Again, another kind of additional answer would be from the organisation's point of view, erm, it can tend to be a little bit too – because the curriculum is decided by the organisation, and we have the academy which is a great support, yet when we go back to the question earlier about resources, we then find you know limitations in terms of that and er, definitely our colleagues can sign up for external courses elsewhere. But we're not in the sort of happy years of 2007 where there was a lot more flexibility. I remember doing detailed learning needs where people could really say "in my management performance this is what I want to focus on, and in, as an individual plan this is what I want to focus on" – you could really say any course and it would really be signed off, it was really nicely done and there's a lot more restrictions in terms of that now.

*Interviewer: Do you agree with the statement that learning investments are required to have a 1-year payback period, meaning that the return created by the investment must equal the full cost of the investment within 12 months?*

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**L&D Director A:** Yes. [pause]

*Interviewer: Ok. "Past studies have demonstrated that investing in human capital and investing in on-the-job or off-the-job training is a competitive strategy, so it generates sustainable growth and wealth." Which are your thoughts for the statement above?*

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**L&D Director A:** Mm, I do. I think you have to invest in your people, erm. You know for me it's really very simple: happy people equals happy guests. If you develop, motivate, inspire, coach, guide, nurture, erm, support, pay fairly, recognise, then that will naturally lead to people that are stimulated, engaged and highly effective, and want to create the best guest experience in our business, um, and so I think er, you know, then your business grows because the guests come back because they're happy, they're made to feel good, and they would rather stay here than anywhere else. So I think it's a chain reaction. Definitely.

*Interviewer: How far in advance are your training programmes planned?*

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**L&D Director A:** We have an annual training calendar, so we have that yearly plan, and from it we then say erm, on the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month what we're going to do for the following month. We release that calendar around the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month. And then we have an evaluation plan where we go back and say, "we said we wanted to run four of these courses" sorry, we have, so we have our plan, but when we're planning our monthly calendar, we know in terms of resources as an evaluation I wanted to, I had here that we would run 4 key programmes, but really with resources and time, we can only actually run two of those. So we're constantly are marking on our calendar what we projected and what's the reality, so when we evaluate at the end of the year we can do so quite effectively.

*Interviewer: So you are actually doing a projection vs an actual, yes?*

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**L&D Director A:** Exactly, yeah.

*Interviewer: Ok and how is that training calendar communicated up through the hotel unit?*

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**L&D Director A:** We communicate it in a number of ways because not all of our colleagues have access to the PC. So I send out on the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month an email to the BAE mailing list, which sends out the calendar like you can see here is a monthly version. Um. colour coded in terms of our energy directory. We also post it on our noticeboards downstairs in our areas, and then every month we have a DT meeting, so we have around 40 departments, we have around 40 departmental trainers, and we go through the calendar in terms of what the courses are, what new things are on it at the beginning of the month so that they're clear as well. And then if there's anything I want to highlight, I would discuss it verbally with the executive team as well.

*Interviewer: Do you have a newsletter? Internal? No.*

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**L&D Director A:** No, no. But people hear from us enough!

*Interviewer: Haha ok.*

*Interviewer: How valuable is the contribution of training to the performance of the organisation?*

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**L&D Director A:** Oh, very, yeah. passionately, and I truly believe that you could ask that question to any of our leaders here and they would really agree with that. I think we're fanatical about the impact of training and it being – not nice training, but impacting training. Um. and if I look at our WIGs, our Wildly Important Goals, that we have, our objectives, is obviously another way of describing them, training sit under three er, well under the three WIGs, we sit under all of them, in some shape or form, so I think yep, 100%

*Interviewer: ok*

**L&D Director A:** and that's measured monthly as well, our performance.

Interviewer: *How important is staff training in relation to the achievement of short term goals for the organisation?*

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**L&D Director A:** Very. Very, very important, yep. In terms of, you know whether we need to focus on farewells, or greetings, and standards of skills or generic-style training, we have to constantly you know tailor-make courses to make sure that those goals are met.

Interviewer: *The short term – how do you define short term in, er, here?*

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**L&D Director A:** Short term; well long-term is our overall WIGs, so yearly objectives, but short term we have a number of drivers to make sure we're on the right track to achieving those WIGs. So our short-term goals would be different projects we're focusing on to make sure we're achieving those goals. Um, and every week as a senior team we come together to make sure that you know we've got that correct vehicle and training initiatives are included in all of those different sections to make sure that we're going in the right direction.

Interviewer: *In terms of timing, what would you consider short-term goals?*

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**L&D Director A:** Er, short-term goals can vary from a week to a month. Long-term obviously a year, going to five years. Yeah.

Interviewer: *How training compares to other organisational initiatives, in regards to the financial investment?*

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**L&D Director A:** Oh. Um. as in how much financial support do we get compared to others? I think we get a lot. But I think I make it a lot. You know. I wanted to create a, a video recently to celebrate our cue journey, and that cost fifty thousand Dirhams, and it was very easy to sign it off and make it happen. I think er, I still want us to have an overall higher percentage of, of that 1%, um, but I think in terms of, of how we're giving investment to other departments, and the other objectives and initiatives I think it's all quite there, er, and I think that depends on your leader, and our leader's very people-focused. So he is, he's very passionate about training and human resources, and how our people feel, and so, we get that support.

Interviewer: *Ok. If employee needs are considered to be both important and specific, what would top management need to do to ensure that the social climate of the organisation is sympathetic to the idea of training as a high priority for everyone?*

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**L&D Director A:** The social climate meaning the... the wellbeing of our colleagues? Erm... could you stop me if I'm going off on the wrong tangent here, but I would see that as our examples would be I've just finished a 4-day training programme, and all of the colleagues apart from one er, you know had their full time off. They weren't working in the evenings

after the training programme, and the one that was, um, I was very upset that he was working because it's a very intense 4-day course which involves hours of homework, and I will make sure that I make it clearer in the next training that I deliver that all of the attendees will understand at managerial level that if they put this person forward they can't work afterwards. That colleague that was working until 1 in the morning, we managed to get out by 9 o'clock, so we did get in there and he knew that everybody was really supporting. And he was also, to be fair to the team, given the option to come next month, but he wanted to be this month. So I think we are learning to be more sympathetic but again that comes down to, to the leader to really say it isn't acceptable to have it any other way. Um. and to also say, for sure the operation's busy, you know, but if we want the learning to be effective then we have to make sure that people, you know, come on a following course, and that those alternatives are clearly understood. So I think our management team are really supportive of that. And that's growing.

**Interviewer:** Thank you.

*Interviewer: How important is the development of your employees' skills to the economic performance of the company?*

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**L&D Director A:** Um it's really important in terms of up-selling, and cross-selling, and you know, our colleagues having that confidence er, to know that they can make a difference to the bottom line, it's one of our key WIGs as well. Um. and, and, and you know it sits in our individual development plans for our colleagues and we have a number of sort of drivers to guide us from product knowledge open days that we're going to be launching soon over here to really have our colleagues be more aware of, of what we actually offer, rather than working in a silo. So I think it's very, very important.

*Interviewer: Ok. Which is the main reason for training, er, frontline please?*

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**L&D Director A:** The main reason for training... we train, er, like I said in our jami'a curriculum, but we also train um, the skill set. Like if I give you, er, and I think both are equally important. We have you know our generic training programmes that are all about that etiquette side of things, um, whether that's understanding how to make a difference in the service, or whether it's understanding how to um, answer a telephone properly, all of the generic courses under that curriculum are critical for development and are reasons for, for training our frontline colleagues, yet on the other side, you know if we use butlers for example, it's a 45-day programme for our new butlers to understand how to press shirts, how to you know, knock on a door, how to ring a doorbell, how to um, you know follow through the requests, how to set up a room when it's a birthday – so they're generic, and then very skill-based.

*Interviewer: In your organisation are training plans produced following the information from quality audits?*

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**L&D Director A:** Yeah, we don't really call them training plans, they're more kind of action plans, and from those action plans we would have training initiatives in, in business, so, a classic example would be when we have one of our mystery guest audits that takes place. From that there are action plans, and from that there are many training, er... you know initiatives that are considered or, or reinforced.

*Interviewer: Ok. Developing frontline employees' careers is the key to the company's success; for instance, White Lodge service calls, is 60% of all promotable[?]e positions are promoted from within. Which is your target percentage to develop and promote internally?*

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**L&D Director A:** I don't know what our – whether we actually *have* a target percentage, it's more of an HR style question. What we do have is... 100% target completion for individual development plans, for all of our colleagues to have, and what we do have is um, a supervisory development plan for any colleagues that are promoted. So for example, this Thursday, I'm in the midst of planning our next supervisory lunch, and these are all of our people that have just been promoted, ah, from waiters, you know from bartenders etc to team leader positions. So they will have a personalised development plan but er it's interesting because I'm not sure what that percentage is, whether we have a target in our business.

*Interviewer: Ok. In your view, does employee recruitment have an impact on training?*

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**L&D Director A:** Mm, yeah it does. In terms of er, you know when they're recruited, are we recruiting people that are friendly in terms of great attitude but have never, er, you know set foot in a 7-star hotel before, or are we promoting people – sorry, are we recruiting people that are, you know, er very skill-based but perhaps don't have any of the sort of generic characteristics that we're looking for? So depending on those we really then have er, to sort of tailor our training and make sure that we're offering the right courses at the right time. Um. it also has a great impact in terms of our four-day welcome programme, it's a huge production. So for example once we started recruitment again at the end of last year, um, we were suddenly going from you know ah no welcome programmes and just er, in its own right[?] a very busy training calendar. And a very busy month for us to, to suddenly having three, four-day welcome – or at the time it was a three-day welcome plan. And that's a huge, huge amount, so that recruitment was critical to understand when it was coming so we could forecast, we could have our resources effectively in, in place. Um, and, and so yeah I think they go very much hand-in-hand. We work very closely with Human Resources.

*Interviewer: I was about to ask that*

**L&D Director A:** mm

*Interviewer: if, if you actually liaise with Human Resources before their recruitment drives.*

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**L&D Director A:** Yeah. we get two reports on a monthly basis that allow us to see, enable us to see the colleagues that are in our business in terms of who's been promoted, who's been transferred; in terms of er, you know new starters that are coming on board, and when we're in the planning stages, my ATM, who's task it is to create the calendar before we sit down and do final approval together will sit with Human Resources and say "right, what are we anticipating?" so our one welcome programme, we know we only need one, and we know we have around 30 colleagues on it, if we were going to about 50 colleagues we'd be running two.

*Interviewer: Based on the following facts, about 70% of organisational learning takes place on the job through solving problems and through special assignments and other day-to-day activities. About 20% occurs through drawing knowledge of others in the workplace, such as informal learning, mentoring, and support and direction from managers and colleagues. 10% occurs through formal learning, whether classroom, workshop or e-learning. Based on the above in your company which is the breakdown of the learning to the employees?*

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**L&D Director A:** Percentagewise?

*Interviewer: Mm-hm.*

[pause]

*Interviewer: What do you think? Like, if you don't have er, percentages as such, would you say that within this company the training is mainly, er, takes place on the job, off the job, or a combination of both?*

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**L&D Director A:** I think it would probably be... these figures are taken from another hotel?

*Interviewer: mm-hm.*

**L&D Director A:** I'd probably say around 60% for the first point. [pause] and I would say... 20/20.

*Interviewer: Ok.*

**L&D Director A:** mm

*Interviewer: do you utilise a lot of e-learning?*

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**L&D Director A:** No, nowhere near where we should be. Erm, and a lot of that is down to the fact that when we launched the key programme here I thought a lot more things were established at the Berge, um, you know like a xxx name of hotel B when I was there, we did a lot of the basics, er, you know I had to start off from scratch, and the first two years were really getting those basics in place and then we did these nice customer, kind of guest

experience training programme for, for the remainder of a year and a half that I was there. Here, I would've liked to have done the same. I thought the basics were done, so when I refer to e-learning, you know we do have a lot available to us from xxx name of company, but our managers don't understand it, er, haven't had the time to see it, we haven't influenced it from, from my level, because we're involved in, in my first year here of a 9-month project. Um, and rolling that out in 9 months, and then creating it too. So now I need to really start pushing the e-learning programmes and the computer-based courses that we offer, because there's a lot that people could be including in their IDP but they just don't know about it. And we haven't had the time to really be as specialist in it because one of the things that you know in xxx name of company we're still trying to get better at is that we produce these things and roll them out, and then understanding kind of happens about 7 months into it. So er, we're still learning.

**Interviewer:** Yup.

**L&D Director A:** yeah

*Interviewer: very good. Which training methods and tools are mainly used by the organisation?*

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**L&D Director A:** A whole variety. Er, we you know target different learning styles, the classroom based, er, we do do you know activities. We really er, look at all sorts of different techniques, presentations, you know our courses are very varied, so the training methods and tools that are used are extremely varied too. E-learning we definitely need to develop like I mentioned before.

*Interviewer: Do you do any type of simulations?*

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**L&D Director A:** We do do in terms of some activities, but nowhere near as advanced as some kind of simulation learning like I've seen Emirates do, for example. I think that, again, comes back to resources. They've got some fantastic tools in place for simulation.

*Interviewer: Er, what is the most significant weakness in your organisation's training programme.*

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**L&D Director A:** That they're outdated. We finally er, from Fritz's side, have just recruited a director of programme design. Or in structural design. And we are using programmes. And it is a positive to be in the company at this time because you know for somebody like me to be able to deliver training, but also create, which is what I love, that's really beautiful as opposed to being in a very stifled corporate company that doesn't allow that creativity to come through, yet as a reflection, you know we should have programmes that are very up-to-date, that include lots and lots of er, different training methods, and, and delivery, and, and be much more advanced. And we're working with the same material five years on. Er like the four-day course I've just finished was in the business five years ago. And it's teaching – this is an example – it's teaching our trainers to become professional trainers, and, and to really,



you know, to be able to deliver to groups of people. Now, in 2010, we should be videoing those people. We should be giving them feedback; they should be able to see it themselves. You know the Marriott were doing things like that 15 years ago, and 5 years ago when I came our, our programmes were like that and they still are. Um, our FOE programmes for our supervisory levels, um, are very, very dry, needing a huge amount of development in terms of er, you know, helping have more of an impact. There's a lot of theory-based, and when we look at our English levels are not strong enough. You know it's day-to-day how to manage this buyer, how to give feedback, you know, how to coach and guide, some of those things.

*Interviewer: Do you have any training translated in their native languages?*

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**L&D Director A:** We do, we have done, we have done some seven habits in Arabic, and we have done erm, some culture training in Arabic as well, and we have done our hallmarks in different languages, to kind of communicate the essence and foundation of, of the organisation, but not enough. And so for me I would really say that's the biggest development need we have and it's great because we now have that position that's just been recruited, and um, we'll be starting soon but it's a huge job, there's so many courses that need to be looked at.

*Interviewer: Hmm. What actions are you undertaking for planning in the future for improving the training function in your organisation?*

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**L&D Director A:** At the moment we're kind of on the way with those actions, so I haven't you know, when I came aboard last year, er... I haven't sort of looked in terms of er, what our next focus needs to be because we're still on resources, we're still on the quality of our training hours, we're still on you know, making sure the money is being spent to the level it needs to be, um, and we're still on that whole wave. Er we have a, a strategy for our whole training overview and we're still in the heart of it, so we meet every month as a team, to make sure we're on track with our strategy to realign ourselves, to look at where the business goals are. We take a day a month, out to do that. Um, where we close the office for that whole day and really focus on what we achieve, what we're next going to focus on in terms of that strategy. So I would think towards the end of this year we'll take a, a number of days out to look at our next strategy so we can really focus on um, you know, how we can plan for 2011 but we're right in the heart of 2010 at the moment.

*Interviewer: What determines the need for retraining frontline employees?*

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**L&D Director A:** Appraisals? Er, coaching, feedback. We're also, er, particularly in the last six months in terms of our executive retreat in, in December, become very very strong at getting feedback from our colleagues. That used to be a yearly thing – it's a yearly thing that goes on at xxx name of the company, but here we'd be doing it every month. Just like our external guest feedback, it's er, we're part of this Q initiative? And so, you know, a classic

example would be that er, a generic er, questionnaire takes place online and in our staff canteen, for all of our colleagues to be able to give their feedback. Um, and, from that lots of spin-offs are taking place in terms of, engineering have now done their own sort of individual survey, um, in terms of how things are going and one example would be that I had a communication this week that two of the sort of team-leader levels need to be having more training [phone rings] um, and er, and er, you know we're going to put them onto some courses as a result. So I think definitely in appraisals, definitely coaching, guiding, and all those different one-to-ones etc but also we're starting to see it from bottom up, we're seeing also our colleagues telling us that these people need more training, that our management team need to be doing more of this and this and this, and then we're able to action it.

*Interviewer: Ok. How much is your per capita spending on training?*

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**L&D Director A:** I don't understand that question: per capita.

*Interviewer: Ok so how much do you spend erm..*

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**L&D Director A:** Do we spend per colleague?

*Interviewer: Per colleague, yeah.*

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**L&D Director A:** I don't have a proper figure. We're supposed to be spending a certain amount per colleague per grade, erm, so for example when you're of a C – sorry, when you're a B grade and an E - A grade you're supposed to get like 10000 Dirhams, but we... when we make a budget matching those guidelines, it's about 5, 6% of our revenue, so that's a hard act to balance in terms of erm, to put in something that's laughable, because when you're not even achieving 1% to put in 6% is unrealistic. Yet, to weight that, that doesn't mean that the research isn't done. We don't sit down very clearly saying "if you want this and this and this, then, then I can give you this, erm, and this is how much it will cost." When we review for the first time at the end of this year spending and our budgets and everything like that then we'll be able to have more of a clearer idea, but at the moment I wouldn't be able to say that cost per person.

*Interviewer: Ok. How do you calculate the return on investment?*

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**L&D Director A:** In terms of training? Or in terms of...

*Interviewer: In terms of what you have invested for your frontline employees, and what is your return based on that investment. Do you have um, do you*

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**L&D Director A:** Not at the level that needs to be er, and xxx name of colleague has kind of guided us into this level er... over the last two years, but we're at a very junior level in xxx name of the company in terms of analysing it. In the past we've gone to a, a kind of – we've just spent. And spent. You know the return of investment isn't matched, for example in



terms of labour turnover, or... recruitment or, you know our different resources and expenditure, it's, it isn't matched, so... and having been at this property sort of halfway through last year and s- and you know, a year now, I don't really have any kind of figures to be able to share with you, but I don't think we're mature at it at all. Um.. I think we've moved away leaps and bounds from holding people accountable for, this is your, this is your individual plan and we want to spend this money on you, and we'll sign this up as a result, um, and you know how did you find it and, but we don't have sort of er strategic measures in place that allow us to share.

*Interviewer: Ok. How do you determine the length of the training programmes?*

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**L&D Director A:** Again, ahh, we come back to a lot of being prescribed in terms of the Jamera curriculum, so I'm hoping some of those things will be reviewed. Because I, I don't think that some of them match what we actually need in the business. What I do and what I try to really influence is programmes that take place more in departments? Um. and programmes where we're seeing more out [?] in the business. Um, and, and I think definitely without question the feedback has been tenfold about the impact of that, so when those programmes take place in the business and we are delivering them, they need to be matching the business needs, and so we tend to do short bursts of training, so a 30-minute session to make an awareness of a particular topic, a 15-minute session to get in there to motivate our colleagues, to teach them something, and it's a generic topic that everybody goes through in a month. And we make it the same from our senior to our junior about that xxx name of the company top- that generic topic. So I'm a big fan of hour-sessions, 30-minute sessions, 2, 3 hour sessions, and in our planning, um, when it's the masses we need to get to, that's what we do. And I always try and go on the lesser; for example the Q programme, you know, that culture sort of style training which involves recognition and you know personality and, and etiquette.. and attitude, mainly. You know, you could do a week's programme on that, and still we have an amazing time, but that doesn't fit with the business needs, so when I designed that programme, it was a day.

*Interviewer: Yep. When do you release your employees to attend training, in regards to time of the day?*

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**L&D Director A:** We'll do, when we do our learning needs analysis, a, a, we will do a survey to find out in terms of every department what suits them best, to tailor that specifically to, to our calendars as they come through for next year. Cos that information was readily available when we came aboard with it for last year. Um, but in terms of ah, you know, we tend to do afternoon training, because that suits our food and beverage, before they start service. And then we tend to do morning training for the more generic and housekeeping. But I think what I try to do is to lead the team so that they are constantly seen as being approachable. We get feedback. So er, we have a structure here where we have generic; food and beverage; and er, rooms. And then we have administration support at the bottom. And in terms of our food and beverage you know we need monthly um, I try to go to those

meetings, but if not, my ATM who oversees the area does go and I meet her, you know, obviously extremely regularly. And in those meetings, when the strategy's looked at in terms of what we're focusing on, which leads to our WIGs and objectives, we can see some really clear things like um, you know feedback for I'd really like English to take place er, at this level, I can see from your tracking and spreadsheets that you're sharing that we have this many people that are a level 1, this many people at a level 2, our commitment is to take them to a level 3, so classes at this time, this time, this time would be better. So we, we get a lot of feedback to be honest, Ioanna, and the more we are open to that feedback, and they see we act on it, the more they give it. And I have really seen that growing in the last year, so you know today I was conversing with housekeeping who, you know, next month and in Jul- in August, we're going to be quieter, and they want to run English classes three times a week just for housekeeping. So they've been very specific for "a class at 8:15 works better for us" finishes by 10:15, so I think er, we really listen to the business, and, and that then makes our job very easy because we can, we get the numbers and everybody's happy and, so for me that's a critical part to how we work here.

*Interviewer: mm-hm. And how about er, front office?*

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**L&D Director A:** Front office as well, I mean they've got a non-stop operation, but then lots of areas in our business does like that is 24 hours service, so... again it's just you know being approachable and being flexible in terms of when, when it works best for them. Generally, my experience has been that kind of the switchover shifts is the best time in the afternoon for them, erm, and that's when it's best to do any kind of er... any kind of short training sessions – they prefer short.

*Interviewer: mm-hmm. Er, the next question I think we've answered already: have you any manpower and training plans?*

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**L&D Director A:** Yeah. and we do in Jamera have an overview kind of template in terms of what our guide should be for that, and that helps us influence the senior levels a lot.

*Interviewer: Ok. Do they actually take it, take that into consideration when you...*

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**L&D Director A:** It's my job to make them. Yeah. yeah. so for example, at JBH I use that manning guide to increase the manning of my team. Here I know Jonathan used it, and the manning was correct when I came here but the resources were not, so it was very easy to use that guide to say you know, for this many colleagues, I think for 750 colleagues we say there should be one training facility. And so, we obviously had nearly 1500 last year, and so one training facility does not match that, and so there was a clear guide in terms of another 250, another 200 or so then we got what matched our business. But our team head count matches that, so that's great.

Interviewer: *Ok. When you're financing training, do you take into account the distinction between general training for transferrable skills and specific training for non-transferrable skills?*

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**L&D Director A:** When we deliver financial training?

**Interviewer:** No, when you're financing

**L&D Director A:** When we're planning?

Interviewer: *When you're paying for the training, when you're... er, thinking to, ok I'm going to spend so much for this type of training, do you actually have a distinction between the one that you know that this colleague if he goes through this training, and it's a transferrable skill, do I really want to actually invest on that or not?*

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**L&D Director A:** Yeah we do. In the full learning needs analysis, there are great distinctions between ah, you know on the job training, what the costs are in terms of that, in terms of more potentially resources, versus you know key courses that different managers and different levels of leaders need to actually attend. So yeah, that, that all comes under our learning needs analysis planning. And we get some generic guidelines, and some specific guidelines from Corporate on that as well.

Interviewer: *Ok. How do you identify the training cost, and who is in charge of the training budget?*

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**L&D Director A:** So the training cost all falls under the LNA, um, as we're making a plan. In terms of the charge of the training budget, er, the budget is all taken care of here, yet worked very very closely with human resources, because although we're both directors, um, the overall ah human resources set reports into the general manager. So that would be Evan Kalamano [?] but I would look at the training budget closely with his support.

Interviewer: *mm-hm. And when you look at the... training costs, what do you incorporate in that like er... if it's an internal training?*

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**L&D Director A:** Mm. So we would look at the manpower resources, we would look at the items that we would need to buy, internally. Um, you know example would be the Q programme, we got rid of the mahogany table, and we went off and bought 30 beanbags, because I wanted a different environment. Um. I wanted different sort of prizes, I wanted different resources to be used, um, simulation and how we wanted to ah, you know DVDs and things like that, so it was all internally delivered, but all of that comes out of our training budget as well. And external training tends to come out of here. Um, there are a few courses which, if they haven't been planned and I decline because we're trying to get into a much more proactive planning style instead of just "I wanna go to this course that are having

tomorrow”, ah, reactive approach which has happened in the past, um, then you know.. occasionally it has gone onto the budget of that department, if we’ve declined it.

*Interviewer: Ok, alright.*

**L&D Director A:** So that can happen because they want to develop that person so passionately. But again you know, with them understanding that we could’ve easily done that. And some of our external training we tend to have on barter agreement as well; sometimes.

*Interviewer: Alright. Is training being evaluated in the company? If so, by whom and how?*

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**L&D Director A:** Yep, we evaluate all of our courses. Um. here at the xxx name of the hotel it wasn’t happening, and it is now happening for every programme, which I’m delighted about. Yeah. so this is what I mean by some of these basics. Or, if it was happening, it was happening very ad-hoc. Um, so it was great to get some of those systems up and running. We use one of the great leaders’ tools in terms of evaluation, which is our NPS, our Net Promoter Score, and so we have a score that allows us to see um, per facilitator and per course how we’re actually doing in terms of that. This only started in terms of an NPS two months ago, but we’ve done evaluation forms at a more junior level. [pause] This is a nice example. So net promoter score feedback forms were introduced in April of this year. So we know that we’ve become second place in the company – Emirates Towers are currently leading. And it allows us to see as trainers our general scores, and for the course as well. And then we can drill that down in terms of which course is more popular... so it’s a, it’s more advanced. I still think we have a long way to go.

*Interviewer: mm. so this is a comparison within the, all the hotel business units within the...*

**L&D Director A:** all [?] yeah. it’s called NPS, and we use it in terms of our guests as well. So it’s a Net Promoter Score. We use that for our guest feedback, to find out how our guests want to come through.

*Interviewer: Ok. And do you train your trainers?*

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**L&D Director A:** Yes. Please explain my response. Yes isn’t enough?!

[laughs]

**L&D Director A:** Er, yes I do, er... again if I give you two examples: previous property would be that I would put them through a task trainer course, there to teach a skill, and then a group trainer course to teach how to deliver to a group of people, er, and then I would observe them in delivery, so I would [phone rings] spot-check delivery as well, um, and er... and coach and guide, and give feedback in one-to-ones etc. Um, Sheila’s a great example of that actually, because she was originally in food and beverage, and came on my task training

course, she was my departmental trainer in food and beverage, and then she came on my group training course, and she did such an amazing job that the minute I had a vacancy, she then got that position. So she was kind of home-grown if you like. She then worked me at the Berge for a year – sorry, at Jamera Beach hotel for a year and a half, and then she came over here, er... seven months ago, to join as well. So she oversees food and beverage, and I know that I don't have to put her through those courses again because I, I'm very comfortable with her delivery, yet um, I'd observed her in rolling out courses – if I roll out a course and I want the number twos to be able to deliver it, they, they're a participant, then they observe, then I observe, and so we do some nice coaching like that. And then in terms of her, um, you know this is an example of a latest kind of email for me joining her, er, in some of the F&B things for the month to see her delivery. And then when we meet, ideally every week, in our one-to-ones, I'm giving her back in terms of that which is motivating, or coaching. Um, well it should always be motivating – but also coaching and guiding, or saying “wow, that was just incredible”, and really giving that recognition. And that happens at all levels. Um. so, er, you know here with the team I haven't had all of them go through the group training course because they did it previously with Jonathan, but I've observed all of them deliver different courses. Not as much as I would like, because of this huge project, erm, and now some of the really exciting parts of my job is that I can observe more of that now that project is over. Um. so it's definitely critical to do that. As a team as well, in terms of our 40 departmental trainers, we've got a lot of work to do [mobile rings? Sounds like a wind chime!] – we've got a lot of work to do to ensure that the trainers training the business are doing that to the right level. So we have spot-check forms at the moment, where we turn up in departments and do that, but it's a very new initiative. Um. it's something that was very embedded at xxx name of hotel B and we were very much included, but there's been some very very interesting things for me to see and observe in terms of how departments have done their training previously and how we've had to almost get to the COS – our Colleague Opinion Survey – to realise how badly it was done, um, and then I got involved. So really my first few months, I was having to get involved with some very heavy feedback in terms of things that were not going correctly, because we hadn't been involved as specialists, you know, we're the ones that are the specialists and often I think that too much is delegated to the departments. You know, great to delegate, but let's make sure it's still happening effectively, and that has been hugely missing.

*Interviewer: Do you have any of the trainers going through any type of certification?*

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**L&D Director A:** mm. so, ah, at the moment two of my ATMs – I have three – so two of my Assistant Training Managers are going through, or have just finished the CTP. They still have their assignments and final project to complete. And then in the RDP of my third ATM, she will then go through um, so that should start at the end of 2010 and she should get that formal accreditation. So really constantly developing them in terms of their, their plans and making sure that we do have these specialists in all areas because they're sort of looking after huge groups of people.

*Interviewer:* mm-hmm. Ok. Fantastic. Thank you so much! Yes.

**L&D Director A:** Done? Good, I hope that helped!

**APPENDIX E**

**-**

**GROUPINGS OF  
INTERVIEW  
THEMES**

Rank	Theme	Question Occurrence	Frequency
1.	<b>Training philosophy</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Inspiration (tr phil)</li> <li>2. Making a difference (tr phil)</li> <li>3. Impact of learning contribution towards organizational success (tr phil)</li> <li>4. Succession planning (tr phil) (res of inv)* (value of T&amp;D-impact on ind)*</li> </ol> <b>Human capital Investment</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Employee progression (tr phil) (value of T&amp;D-impact on ind)*(reason for tr)*</li> <li>6. Employee investment (tr phil)</li> <li>7. Creation of opportunities (tr phil) (result of inv)*</li> <li>8. Creation of learning opportunities (action) (imp of recr)*</li> <li>9. Job skills enhancement (area of impr)</li> <li>10. Attitude change via inspirational training (reason for tr)</li> </ol>	Q2 Q2 Q2 Q2, Q6*,Q8*  Q2, Q8,* Q14*  Q2 Q2, Q6*, Q4, Q17* Q2 Q14	1 1 1 1  2  1 1 1 1 1 total :11
2.	<b>Challenges of training</b> <b>Time</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Time (ch) (ch of recr)* (imp of recr)*(empl time off)</li> </ol> <b>Availability of Resources</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Insufficient investment in L&amp;D (perc of inv) (fin inv compar to other init) (impr area)</li> <li>3. Under resourced- Lack of resources/staffing/facilities (perc of inv) (tr weakn)* (impr area)</li> <li>4. Sufficient investment in L&amp;D based on benchmarking results (perc of inv)</li> </ol> <b>Cost</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Cost of training - High requirement on money (drawback) (imp of recr)* (tr weak) (impr area) (ann manp &amp; tr plans)</li> </ol> <b>Recruitment</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Recruitment (ch) (ch of recr)(imp of recr)</li> <li>7. Provision of right courses at right time (imp of recr)</li> <li>8. Impact on team (imp of recr)</li> <li>9. Type of property (imp of recr)</li> <li>10. Creation of tailor made courses (achiev of shter goals) (imp of recr)</li> <li>11. Creation of learning opportunities (action)* (imp of recr)</li> <li>12. Time(ch of recr), (imp of recr)</li> <li>13. Increased cost of training (imp of recr)</li> <li>14. Impact on customer (result of inv) (imp of recr)*</li> </ol>	Q1B, Q3*, Q17*,Q25  Q3,Q11,Q21 Q3, Q20*,Q21 Q3 Q3, Q17*, Q20,Q21,Q26 Q1B,Q3, Q17 Q17 Q17 Q17 Q9, Q17 Q4*,Q17 Q1B*, Q3, Q17,Q25* Q17 Q17 Q1B Q1B,Q13	2,3 1,2,3 1,3 3  1,2,3,4 1,2,3 1,2 1 1 2,3 2 1,3 1 1 3 1,2 4 5 1





	<p>7. Business levels (length of tr) (empl time off)</p> <p><b>IDP</b></p> <p>8. IDP(rep ind needs) (empl skill to cpy econ perf) (empl skill to cpy econ perf)</p> <p>9. Teaching managers how to complete IDP (action)</p>	Q5	1 total:25
5.	<p><b>Organizational benefits</b></p> <p>1. Business growth (result of inv)</p> <p>2. Guest loyalty , Repeat customers (result of inv) (value of T&amp;D-impact on gue)</p> <p>3. Guest satisfaction, Happy customers (result of inv) (value of T&amp;D-impact on gue)</p> <p>4. Creation and provision of best guest experience (result of inv) (reason for tr)</p> <p>5. Wealth (result of inv) (value of T&amp;D - impact on buss)</p> <p>6. Impact on product (result of inv)</p> <p>7. Impact on reputation (result of inv)</p> <p>8. Impact on perceptions of the organization (result of inv)</p> <p>9. Impact on customer (result of inv) (imp of recr)*</p> <p>10. Training assists with openings of new hotel properties (value of T&amp;D- impact on buss)</p> <p>11. Organizational goals linked to L&amp;D activities (achiev of shter goals) (achiev of lonter goals) (empl skill to cpy econ perf)</p> <p>12. Training is an integral part to company success (achiev of lonter goals)</p> <p>13. Alignment of service (achiev of lonter goals)</p> <p>14. Keep up standards and reputation (achiev of lonter goals)</p> <p>15. Maintain brand integrity (achiev of lonter goals)</p> <p>16. Continuous expansion (achiev of lonter goals)</p> <p>17. Raise brand awareness worldwide (achiev of lonter goals)</p> <p>18. Creation of opportunities (result of inv)</p> <p>19. Employee loyalty &amp; retention (result of inv) (reason for tr)</p> <p>20. Employee empowerment (result of inv)</p> <p>21. Employees engagement (result of inv)</p>	<p>Q6</p> <p>Q6, Q8</p> <p>Q6, Q8</p> <p>Q6,Q14</p> <p>Q6</p> <p>Q6</p> <p>Q6</p> <p>Q6</p> <p>Q6,Q17*</p> <p>Q8</p> <p>Q9,Q10,Q13</p> <p>Q10</p> <p>Q10</p> <p>Q10</p> <p>Q10</p> <p>Q10</p> <p>Q10</p> <p>Q10</p> <p>Q6</p> <p>Q6, Q14</p> <p>Q6</p> <p>Q6</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1,2</p> <p>1,2</p> <p>1,4</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1,2,3</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1,2</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>total:30</p>
6.	<p><b>Employee benefits</b></p> <p><b>Career growth</b></p> <p>1. Career growth (tr phil) (rep ind needs) (res of inv) (value of T&amp;D-impact on ind) (reason for tr)</p> <p>2. Employee progression (tr phil)* (value of T&amp;D- impact on ind)(reason for tr)</p> <p>3. Succession planning (tr phil)* (value of T&amp;D- impact on ind)</p> <p><b>Employees dissatisfaction with career progression</b></p> <p>4. Lack of career opportunities (dissatisf)</p> <p>5. Lack of access to employees professional growth</p>	<p>Q2,Q5, Q6, Q8</p> <p>Q2,* Q8, Q14</p> <p>Q2*, Q6,Q8</p> <p>Q12</p> <p>Q12</p> <p>Q12</p> <p>Q16</p>	<p>2,3,4,5,6</p> <p>1,2</p> <p>1,2</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p>

	(dissatisf) 6. False promises given by management (dissatisf) 7. Lack of transparency (inter prom) 8. Lack of internal talent promotion (inter prom) <b>Benefits linked to attitude and behaviour</b> 9. Employees values (value of T&D-impact on ind) 10. Employees attitude (value of T&D-impact on ind) 11. Employees motivation (value of T&D-impact on ind) 12. Increase rapport with managers and team (value of T&D – impact on ind) 13. High employee satisfaction with training provision (satisf) 14. Happy employees (result of inv) <b>Benefits linked to Knowledge, Skills and Abilities</b> 15. Increase confidence on selling (empl skill to cpy econ perf) 16. Increase product knowledge and awareness (empl skill to cpy econ perf) 17. Development and increase of employees knowledge, skills and competencies (result of inv) (value of T&D – impact on ind) (reason for tr)	Q16  Q8 Q8 Q8 Q8 Q12 Q6  Q13 Q13 Q6, Q8,Q14, Q17	1  1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1,4,9 total:32
7.	<b>Adequacy of training environment</b> <b>Training Programs</b> 1. Training nature (ch) – basic/repetitive 2. Annual Training calendar (planning of tr prog) (emp time off) 3. Communication (planning of tr prog) 4. Relevance and identification of key courses /content/kind of training (planning of tr prog) (length of tr) 5. Effectiveness of training (length of tr) 6. Staffing guide (ann manpower & tr plans) <b>Weaknesses of training programs</b> 7. Outdated material (tr weakness) 8. Update and advance training methods / delivery (action) 9. Development of trainers (action) (impr area) 10. Quality of training of hours (impr area) 11. Benchmark (impr area) 12. Lack of calculating ROI (weakn) (empl time off) 13. Under resourced- Lack of resources/staffing/facilities(perc of inv)* (tr weakn) (impr area)* 14. Language barrier (ch)* (ch)* (tr weakn) 15. Lack of assessment and evaluation (area of impr)* (tr weakn) 16. Lack of performance measurement (ch-achiev of shter goals) (tr weakn) 17. Lack of review and follow up (area of impr) (tr	Q1B,Q3 Q7, Q25 Q7 Q7, Q24  Q24 Q26  Q20 Q20 Q20,Q21 Q21 Q21 Q22,Q25 Q3*, Q20,Q21*  Q1B*,Q3*,Q20 Q4,Q20* Q9,Q12,Q20* Q4,Q20*  Q4, Q20,Q21 Q4,Q18 Q4,Q18 Q18, Q19	1,2 3,4 3 1,4  1 2  2 1 1,2 1 1 5,6 1  1 1 1,2 2  2,3,4 1,6 1,6 2,7

	weakn)	Q19	1
		Q19	2
	<b>Use of various training methods &amp; techniques</b>	Q19	1
	18. Blended learning (area of impr) (action) (impr area)	Q19	1
	19. E-learning (area of impr) (tr method)	Q19	1
	20. OTJ (area of impr) (tr method)	Q19,Q31*	1
	21. Classroom (tr method)	Q4*,Q20	1
	22. Assessment & development centres (tr method)	Q9*,Q12*,Q20	1
	23. Lack in simulation (tr method)	Q4*, Q20	1
	24. Buddy system (tr method)	Q4	1
	25. Project based (tr method)		total:70
	26. Scripts, role plays (tr method)		
	27. Coaching & mentoring & guiding (tr method) (train dvlp)*		
	<b>Post-training</b>		
	28. Lack of assessment and evaluation (area of impr)* (tr weakn)		
	29. Lack of performance measurement (ch-achiev of shter goals*) (tr weakn)		
	30. Lack of review and follow up (area of impr) (tr weakn)*		
	31. Lack of reinforcement towards learning continuation (area of impr)		
<b>8.</b>	<b>Role of L&amp;D department</b>		
	1. L&D department (resp for fund int tr) (resp for fund ext tr)	Q28, Q29	5,10
	2. Trainers role shift to consultant role (action) (impr area)	Q4, Q21	1,2
	3. L&D department to add business value (respons)	Q12	1
	4. L&D department to sell training (respons)	Q12	2
	<b>LNA</b>		
	5. Use of LNA (rep of all) (planning of tr prog) (result of qual) (Ident tr costs)	Q5,Q7,Q15, Q27	1,4,5,6
	6. Use of survey to determine the needs(rep of all) (empl time off) (tr eval)	Q5, Q25,Q30	1,2,3
	<b>Feedback</b>		
	7. Guest feedback (empl skill to cpy econ perf) (result of qual audit)	Q13, Q15	1,4
	8. Feedback / Alignment of training activities with other hotel properties	Q21,Q24	1,2
	9. Trainers Feedback (length of tr)	Q24	1
	10. Listen to colleague feedback (action)(length of tr) (tr eval)*	Q12,Q24, Q30*	1,2
	11. Management (HODs) feedback (length of tr) (empl time off) (tr eval)*	Q24,Q25, Q30*	2,5
	<b>Training Budget</b>		
	12. Lack of flexibility (ch) due to financial crisis	Q5	1
	13. Discussion with HODs to tailor the budget and training calendar	Q5	1
		Q7, Q27	2,7
		Q11	1
			1
		Q30	3
		Q30	5,7
		Q15, Q30	1
		Q30	1

	14. Budget based on LNA (planning of tr prog) (ident of tr costs)	Q12*,Q24*, Q30	1
	15. Based on the optimization of resources (fin inv compar to other init)	Q24*,Q25*, Q30	4
	<b>Training evaluation</b>		4
	16. Utilization of evaluation tool (tr eval)	Q31	1
	17. Annual Evaluation report (tr eval)	Q31	3
	18. Quality drives training initiatives (result of qual audit) (tr eval)	Q31	2
	19. Feedback from HQ (tr eval)	Q31	1
	20. Listen to colleague feedback (action)*(length of tr)* (tr eval)	Q31	1
	21. Management (HODs) feedback (length of tr)* (empl time off)* (tr eval)	Q19*, Q31	total:80
	<b>Trainers development</b>		
	22. Task trainer course (train dvlp)		
	23. Group trainer (train dvlp)		
	24. Observation of training programs (train dvlp)		
	25. Spot check training delivery		
	26. Formal accreditation (train dvlp)		
	27. Organization of learning events (train dvlp)		
	28. Coaching & mentoring & guiding (tr method)* (train dvlp)		
	29. One-to-one feedback (train dvlp)		
	30. Recognition		

Note: The \* means that this answer / meaning re-occurs in other questions too and therefore in the next column is reflected in which question it re-occurs.

Note: The following table explains the abbreviations used for the meaning of the indicators.

**Coding interpretation:**

Achiev of lonter goals	achievement of long term goals
Achiev of shter goals	achievement of short term goals
Ann manp & tr plans	annual manpower and training plans
Area of impr	area of improvement
Ch	challenge
Ch of recr	challenge of recruitment
Diss	dissatisfaction
Empl skill to cpy econ perf	employee skill to company economic performance
Empl time off	employee time off
Fin inv compar to other init	financial investment compared to other initiative
HODs	head of departments
Ident tr costs	identification of training costs
Imp of recr	impact of recruitment
Impr area	area of improvement
Inter prom	internal promotion
Length of tr	length of training
Link to inv	link to investment
Perc of inv	perception of investment
Planning of tr program	planning of training program
Reason for Tr	reason for training
Rep ind needs	representing individual needs
Rep of all	representing of all
Rep or needs	representing organizational needs
Res of inv	result of investment
Resp for fund ext tr	responsible for funding external training
Resp for fund int tr	responsible for funding internal training
Respons	responsibility
Result of qual audit	result of quality audit
Result of qual	result of quality
Satisf	satisfaction
Tr eval	training evaluation
Tr high pri by mgt	training high priority by management
Tr method	training method
Tr phil	training philosophy
Tr weakn	training weakness
Train dvlp	trainer development
Value of T&D- impact on ind	value of training and development- impact on individual
Value of T&D-- impact on buss	value of training and development- impact on business
Value of T&D- impact on gue	value of training and development- impact on guest

**APPENDIX F**

**-**

**TRAINING  
OBSERVATIONS**

## Part 1 Venue

Observation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>Date:</b>	08/06/2010	21/06/2010	22/06/2010	13/07/2010	20/09/2010	22/09/2010	27/09/2010	12/10/2010
<b>Location</b>	Training room 1 – Hotel F	Arabic Restaurant – Hotel B	Training room Genesse – Hotel B	Training room 3 – Hotel A	Training room 2- Hotel A	Sports & Leisure Centre – room 1- Hotel C	Training room 2 – Hotel C	Boardroom room 1- Hotel E
<b>Topic</b>	Telephone Skills	LQA standards – Leading Quality standards	Praise me reloaded – Appraisal	Welcome programme- induction	Developing your career	Creating memorable experiences - guest experiences	Who moved my cheese?- The need for change	Task Trainer Workshop - Career and Self Development
<b>Signposting</b>	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>Classroom layout</b>	U shape	Sat U shape in restaurant	Theatre style (Use of bin bags for the seating of the participants)	U shape	U shape	Theatre style	U shape	U shape
<b>Arrival welcome</b>	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
<b>Air con</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Poor	Good	Good
<b>Lighting</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Poor	Good	Good
<b>AV Equipment</b>	Good	N/A	Good	Good	yes	Adequate	Poor	Good
<b>Refreshments</b>	N/A Ramadan	N/A	Good	Good	Poor	Adequate	Poor	Good



## Part 2 Demographics

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<i>Date:</i>	<i>08/06/2010</i>	<i>21/06/2010</i>	<i>22/06/2010</i>	<i>13/07/2010</i>	<i>20/09/2010</i>	<i>22/09/2010</i>	<i>27/09/2010</i>	<i>12/10/2010</i>
<i>Location</i>	<i>Training room 1 – Hotel F</i>	<i>Arabic Restaurant – Hotel B</i>	<i>Training room Genesse – Hotel B</i>	<i>Training room 3 – Hotel A</i>	<i>Training room 2- Hotel A</i>	<i>Sports &amp; Leisure Centre – room 1- Hotel C</i>	<i>Training room 2 – Hotel C</i>	<i>Boardroom room 1- Hotel E</i>
<i>Topic</i>	<i>Telephone Skills</i>	<i>LQA standards</i>	<i>Praise me reloaded - Appraisal</i>	<i>Welcome programme</i>	<i>Developing your career</i>	<i>Creating memorable experiences</i>	<i>Who moved my cheese</i>	<i>Task Trainer Workshop</i>
<b>Divisions</b>	Rooms;  Food & Beverage	—  Food & Beverage	Rooms;  Food & Beverage Stewarding; Security; Spa	Rooms;  Food & Beverage	Rooms;  Food & Beverage	Rooms;  Food & Beverage	Rooms;  Food & Beverage	Rooms;  Food & Beverage Transportation; retail; finance; medical
<b>Participants</b>	20	13	17	30	13	32	16	8
<b>Gender</b>	F:11 M:9	F:6 M:7	F:4 M:13	F:15 M:15	F:5 M:8	F:6 M:26	F:5 M:11	F:2 M:6
<b>Origin – UAE Nationals</b>	1	1	-	-	-	2	—	1
<b>Other Mid East (GCC) &amp; Arabic</b>	10	1	-	1	1	3	3	1
<b>Non-arabic African</b>	-	-	2	5	-	2	2	1
<b>Asia Subcontinent</b>	4	5	10	7	7	16	5	4
<b>South East Asian</b>	4	3	4	10	3	8	4	1
<b>W &amp; E European</b>	-	2	1	2	-	-	1	-
<b>Central Asia, Russia &amp; CIS</b>	1	1	-	3	2	1	2	-
<b>Central &amp; South America</b>	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
<b>Australia &amp; South Pacific</b>	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-

### Part 3 Training Information

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<i>Date:</i>	08/06/2010	21/06/2010	22/06/2010	13/07/2010	20/09/2010	22/09/2010	27/09/2010	12/10/2010
<i>Location</i>	Training room 1 – Hotel F	Arabic Restaurant – Hotel B	Training room Genesse – Hotel B	Training room 3 – Hotel A	Training room 2- Hotel A	Sports & Leisure Centre – room 1- Hotel C	Training room 2 – Hotel C	Boardroom room 1- Hotel E
<i>Topic</i>	Telephone Skills	LQA standards	Praise me reloaded - Appraisal	Welcome programme	Developing your career	Creating memorable experiences	Who moved my cheese	Task Trainer Workshop
<b>Starting time</b>	10am-1pm	5pm-5.30pm	4pm – 6pm	9am-6pm	9am - 12pm	9am-6pm	2pm-4pm	9am-6pm
<b>Start on time</b>	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no 10 min late due to IT issues	no 10 min late due to IT issues	yes
<b>Finish on time</b>	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>Topic introduced</b>	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>Aims/objectives introduced</b>	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>Training agenda established/how</b>	Yes Presentation	Yes LQA standards due to mystery visit and results.	Yes Presentation	Yes Presentation Full three day schedule explained then day-to-day breakdown.	Yes Presentation	Yes Presentation	Yes Introduction to the program. Played 20 min programme DVD	Yes Introduction to the three day schedule
<b>Length of training</b>	3 hours	30 min	2 hours	3 days	3 hours	1-2 days	3 hours	3 days
<b>Why training needed</b>	Participants need new information or	Refresher course to maintain standards	Management and HODs requested it	Participants need new information or skills.	New programme on offer	Mandatory in the hotel	Participants need new information or skills	Participants need new information or skills

	skills			Everyone else has been on that training course.				
<b>Generic/specific work skills</b>	Specific skills related to profile	Generic skills - Personalized interaction with guests	Generic skills – Appraisals	Generic skills - orientation	Generic skills	Generic skills- customer service	Generic skills	Generic skills-training
<b>Aids – Whiteboard</b>	yes	N/A	No	No	yes	yes	No	Yes
<b>OHP</b>	No	N/A	No	No	No	No	No	No
<b>Flipchart</b>	yes	N/A	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	Yes
<b>Visual display</b>	yes	N/A	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	Yes
<b>Audio</b>	yes	N/A	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	Yes
<b>Training techniques used</b>	learning through questions; interactive training; role play	learning through questions; interactive training; discussion	learning through questions;	Lecture; learning through questions; demonstration; individual learning; interactive training; discussion and group learning	Lecture; learning through questions;	learning through questions;	Lecture;	Lecture; learning through questions; demonstrations; discussion and group learning
<b>Type of information included</b>	Telephone script; Benefits of answering calls in professional way; Figures based on the number of calls answered by the reservationist	Confidence, posture, eye contact, product knowledge, ways of starting a conversation with a guest and farewell at the end of the interaction. Guest recommendations	Explanation of benefits, competencies and company competencies families: Job level competencies were explained followed	<b>Day 1.</b> Company vision, mission, guidelines and hallmarks. DVD of company's global portfolio. Introduction to company and hotel executive committee.	<b>1<sup>st</sup> activity:</b> In groups of 3, find items as per their cards to achieve working goals. <b>2<sup>nd</sup> activity:</b> Draw pictures that demonstrate	Hotel mission statement. Guidelines and hallmarks emphasized. Mission statement linked to customer service	Information about how an individual should accept change. Cheese represents something which is very important to an individual and maize represents	<b>Day 1.</b> Why train? Benefits of training. Competencies of trainers. Defining learning and principles of learning Identifying training needs by looking into the actual performance vs. the desired performance

	ion department in 2005.	<p>ation is 75% - hotel target is 77% for 2010. To enhance guest experience via personalized interaction .</p>	by recap and distribution of handout .	<p>Tour of hotel. Lunch at gym for team working exercise delivered by fitness instructors. Explanation of local culture and laws.</p> <p><b>Day 2.</b> Introduction to HR department, policies and procedures. Introduction to Business Excellence department. English assessment. Health &amp; Safety</p> <p><b>Day 3</b> Refreshing the guidelines and hallmarks . Cultural awareness.</p>	<p>trate an achievable working goal</p> <p><b>3<sup>rd</sup> activity:</b> Write a SMART objective with information from 1<sup>st</sup> activity</p>	(welcome, look after, wow, happy memories).	<p>ts the environment.</p> <p>Each participant had to make a wish and then discuss which actions they should take in order to fulfil their wish and achieve that objective .</p>	<p>Explanation of the LQA checklist. Sharing mystery shoppers results</p> <p>Explaining differences between was of children learning and adult learning</p> <p>Characteristic of an effective trainer</p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> activity: Using a flipchart list the barriers to training. Using questions, reasons for asking questions and types of questions. Ways of handling responses from the learners.</p> <p><b>Day 2</b> Determining training needs</p> <p>Writing up the aim, learning outcomes and assessment criteria of a training session</p> <p><b>Activity 2:</b> Write up a task training session plan and obtain feedback by participants with the use of a feedback</p>
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								summary sheet. <b>Day 3</b> Evaluation of training and corrective training. Evaluation methods/techniques. Identification and reasons for non-compliance. Steps for corrective training. Administration of training. Induction, departmental training manual, documents and forms used to monitor training activities. <b>Activity 3:</b> Present a training session in front of participants and facilitator so to complete successfully the course (formal assessment).
<b>Activities introduced</b>	Not all	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
<b>Audience participation</b>	Yes but not all. One uninterested, typed on smart phone all	Yes Short session but extremely interactive everyone was answering	Yes Two exercises. 1 <sup>st</sup> – write down on flipchart	Yes Everyone introduced themselves, talked about background and	Yes Very interactive session, a lot of participation and	Yes but not all. One group didn't participate at all, very reluctant and	Yes Very good discussion during session with some disagree	Yes Very good participation from all the participants. Very enthusiastic and eager to pass the

[illegible]

	Topic	Further Comments /Other observations
1	Telephone skills	<p><b>1<sup>st</sup> activity:</b> to call a hotel and do a mystery call – comments from participants that the person answering was very polite however he had monotonous voice and the answers given to the caller were very monotonous too.</p> <p><b>2<sup>nd</sup> activity:</b> divided participants into two groups and were asked to list the expectations of a guest when calling the hotel</p> <p>Personal observation: the groups were too large for this activity it could have been better to be split in more than 2 groups so there is active participation by all the participants</p> <p><b>3<sup>rd</sup> activity:</b> in pairs had to complete a maize exercise</p> <p><b>4<sup>th</sup> activity:</b> role play – A pair were pretending to be the hotel employee and the caller and the other pair had to give feedback based on the learning content of the session. Very good exercise but some participants had to do it in Arabic rather than in English and others were shy to give constructive feedback.</p>
2	LQA Standards	It was a very successful session, with a lot of information exchange between facilitator and participants. Very precise, easy and comprehensive material for the participants to absorb and utilize within their work environment
3	Praise me reloaded	Music was playing at the beginning of the session until it started. Extremely relaxed environment, set up was very innovative and all participants were really participating by asking questions and participating in exercises. It would have been even more successful if participants were given an appraisal booklet to fill up and then go through by giving individual feedback
4	Welcome programme	A very good designed welcome program with different department getting involved. Delivered by different facilitators and management in different roles. A very nice way to be integrated into a new company. Everyone enjoyed the fact that there were so many different types of delivery used and the exchange of information was done over 3 days. The only stressful part was the assessment in English for some of the participants since they had to complete three parts a writing, reading comprehension and oral.
5	Developing your career	<p>It would have been better if the participants had the time to do some more practical exercises and actually use the intranet. So probably the use of computers would facilitate the training session. They could see how to upload their CVs in the TMS or even how their appraisals are linked to SMART and to their career growth. Also real examples of colleagues were given who have stepped up the ladder and it was used as a positive motivator for the participants.</p> <p>Room was infested with small insects which were extremely annoying and disrupting. The tea and coffee facilities outside the room were very poorly set up and not so hygienic.</p>
6	Creating memorable experiences	<p>The training room had been set in a v bad layout. We were unable to watch the videos and see the writing part on the videos. The font used in slides was extremely small. We had to move to the next room which is a gym room since the first one was very hot, had far too much natural lighting, no blinds and extremely difficult to watch.</p> <p>The gym room was actually booked for later on the day and the trainers had the pressure with time.</p>
7	Who moved my cheese	IT support was called to resolve technical issues with the equipment. Unfortunately the facilitator played the DVD but it was extremely hard to hear, very poor sound. Participants were disappointed and lost interest at the beginning however later on with the discussion the interest level increased.
8	Task trainer	The training program was successful because the material delivered by the facilitator was put into practice by the second day. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions relevant to their training sessions and obviously demonstrate their capabilities on sharing a specific skill with the rest of the group. High levels of participation and interaction were shared amongst the participants.

**APPENDIX G**

**-**

**INTER-ITEM  
CORRELATION  
MATRIX**



## APPENDIX G – INTER-ITEM CORRELATION MATRIX

APPE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
1	1.00																													
2	0.76	1.00																												
3	0.48	0.54	1.00																											
4	0.67	0.72	0.58	1.00																										
5	0.61	0.62	0.48	0.65	1.00																									
6	0.51	0.60	0.45	0.51	0.53	1.00																								
7	0.43	0.56	0.48	0.50	0.48	0.85	1.00																							
8	0.41	0.52	0.42	0.48	0.47	0.76	0.81	1.00																						
9	0.42	0.52	0.45	0.47	0.45	0.75	0.80	0.83	1.00																					
10	0.43	0.51	0.41	0.48	0.49	0.74	0.79	0.82	0.85	1.00																				
11	0.42	0.53	0.40	0.47	0.46	0.73	0.76	0.78	0.80	0.83	1.00																			
12	0.54	0.54	0.39	0.49	0.42	0.48	0.45	0.43	0.43	0.42	0.43	1.00																		
13	0.51	0.49	0.33	0.43	0.44	0.47	0.45	0.42	0.41	0.43	0.44	0.76	1.00																	
14	0.48	0.48	0.32	0.42	0.38	0.45	0.44	0.41	0.40	0.45	0.43	0.66	0.67	1.00																
15	0.49	0.48	0.35	0.41	0.37	0.44	0.40	0.43	0.42	0.41	0.41	0.62	0.59	0.65	1.00															
16	0.42	0.41	0.26	0.33	0.32	0.37	0.40	0.37	0.36	0.39	0.35	0.49	0.49	0.54	0.66	1.00														
17	0.41	0.43	0.34	0.35	0.34	0.38	0.38	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.41	0.40	0.44	0.44	0.48	0.47	1.00													
18	0.45	0.44	0.24	0.36	0.38	0.28	0.24	0.19	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.48	0.43	0.44	0.39	0.37	0.24	1.00												
19	0.43	0.40	0.27	0.40	0.39	0.25	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.25	0.18	0.37	0.40	0.42	0.39	0.38	0.20	0.73	1.00											
20	0.41	0.36	0.30	0.31	0.32	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.24	0.29	0.25	0.34	0.36	0.38	0.32	0.32	0.20	0.57	0.69	1.00										
21	0.46	0.46	0.30	0.38	0.38	0.31	0.26	0.28	0.30	0.29	0.27	0.35	0.39	0.37	0.34	0.34	0.18	0.63	0.74	0.70	1.00									
22	0.42	0.39	0.27	0.37	0.36	0.29	0.26	0.25	0.24	0.25	0.21	0.33	0.37	0.34	0.29	0.35	0.17	0.60	0.74	0.65	0.77	1.00								
23	0.42	0.49	0.37	0.45	0.46	0.44	0.47	0.45	0.46	0.49	0.43	0.34	0.39	0.36	0.41	0.33	0.28	0.44	0.50	0.47	0.49	0.48	1.00							

stat	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
24	0.47	0.43	0.34	0.43	0.41	0.39	0.39	0.35	0.38	0.40	0.36	0.39	0.44	0.37	0.39	0.35	0.25	0.54	0.64	0.60	0.63	0.67	0.61	1.00						
25	0.41	0.46	0.42	0.45	0.41	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.50	0.51	0.47	0.44	0.43	0.41	0.38	0.34	0.35	0.41	0.47	0.46	0.47	0.45	0.68	0.64	1.00					
26	0.47	0.48	0.38	0.47	0.46	0.48	0.47	0.49	0.53	0.50	0.49	0.41	0.45	0.39	0.36	0.31	0.32	0.38	0.43	0.41	0.44	0.43	0.73	0.60	0.75	1.00				
27	0.42	0.45	0.36	0.42	0.42	0.40	0.37	0.42	0.44	0.44	0.42	0.38	0.41	0.39	0.40	0.35	0.33	0.41	0.44	0.47	0.45	0.43	0.61	0.45	0.68	0.73	1.00			
28	0.41	0.42	0.34	0.41	0.42	0.38	0.35	0.38	0.39	0.40	0.40	0.42	0.43	0.46	0.39	0.31	0.32	0.52	0.58	0.52	0.56	0.59	0.55	0.58	0.65	0.68	0.71	1.00		
29	0.24	0.26	0.34	0.30	0.32	0.26	0.26	0.27	0.29	0.33	0.30	0.28	0.26	0.36	0.27	0.27	0.34	0.41	0.44	0.51	0.43	0.41	0.48	0.48	0.49	0.47	0.45	0.50	1.00	
30	0.35	0.32	0.30	0.32	0.33	0.22	0.21	0.20	0.21	0.20	0.15	0.34	0.29	0.28	0.30	0.28	0.18	0.49	0.59	0.56	0.60	0.62	0.40	0.51	0.36	0.31	0.37	0.43	0.50	1.00

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed)

